

EDWARD BULWER
FIRST BARON LYTTON
OF KNEBWORTH



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A SOCIAL, PERSONAL, AND POLITICAL
MONOGRAPH

BY

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"ENGLAND : ITS PEOPLE, POLITY, AND PURSUITS"
WITH SEQUEL, "SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF VICTORIAN AGE"
"GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS"
"BRITISH DIPLOMACY : ITS MAKERS AND MOVEMENT"
"SOCIETY IN THE COUNTRY HOUSE"

WITH A FRONTISPIECE PORTRAIT



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DEDICATION

TO

J. P. STEELE, Esq., M.D.

NOW AMONG THE FEW SURVIVORS
AS WELL AS ALWAYS
AMONG THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED AND EFFECTIVE
MEMBERS OF
THE LITERARY RANK AND FILE
WHEN BULWER-LYTTON
WAS A LEADER
IN APPRECIATIVE RECOLLECTION OF FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE
TOGETHER WITH COMRADESHIP OF PEN
COVERING MANY YEARS
AND IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF
MUCH HELP RECEIVED FROM
HIS BRIGHT INTELLIGENCE, SOUND JUDGMENT, AND
VARIOUS KNOWLEDGE
NOT LESS IN MANY OTHER WRITINGS
THAN IN THE PREPARATION OF THE PRESENT WORK
THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS SINCERELY ATTACHED
T. H. S. ESCOTT

PREFACE

NO writer on the subject of this book can ignore the original and till then unprinted writings of Bulwer-Lytton contained in the two volumes of memoirs published by his son and literary executor, himself an accomplished prose author as well as graceful poet, whose acquaintance it was the present writer's privilege to possess. At the same time the first Lord Lytton's published works of every kind disclose to the patient reader a generally unsuspected amount of self-portraiture and self-narrative. This constitutes a memorial of Bulwer-Lytton more finished, genuine, and even trustworthy than any professedly autobiographical matter which he may have left behind him. Especially applicable to his shorter pieces in *The Student*, this statement holds equally good of all his novels not less than of many among his essays. The most valuable and instructive sources of this volume have therefore been found in the first Lord Lytton's own writings, illustrated at one or two political points and undesignedly commented on by the first Earl Lytton's *Fables in Song*, as well as by conversations and correspondence between the father and the son, recorded by Lady Betty Balfour in her two clever and charming volumes. Personal and family accidents had made me known to Lord Lytton in my childhood. Years afterwards he was good enough to recognize these early germs of acquaintanceship, and, in the most gratuitously kind and obliging way, to extend to me his observation before any writings of mine had begun to attract attention. Several years later some sketches of Knebworth by Mr. T. R. Macquoid in a periodical publication were accompanied by

letterpress from my pen. Out of my association with this distinguished artist grew repeated visits to Lord Lytton's Hertfordshire home during the latest years of his life. Others to whose personal knowledge of Bulwer-Lytton I am most indebted have unhappily passed away. Chief among them were Mr. John Forster and the fourth Earl of Carnarvon. At the latter's house, Highclere Castle, my acquaintance with Lord Lytton had many opportunities of improving itself, while to Lord Carnarvon almost exclusively I owe the hitherto unpublished narrative of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's parliamentary and official course. Lord Carnarvon, as Under Secretary for the Colonies when Lytton was Secretary of State, not only had his chief's political confidence, but knew more of his personal habits and private life than did most of his friends, and was one among the very few who stayed with his chief at Knebworth for days and even weeks together when there were no other guests. I have also, in preparing this volume, profited not a little from exclusive information obligingly given me by the late Sir William Fraser and the present Mr. Henry Chaplin, who, through Lord Henry Bentinck, was acquainted with some purely social aspects of Lord Lytton's life, naturally not coming within the ken of political or literary friends.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

BRIGHTON, *January*, 1910.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
I. EXPERT ESTIMATES AND HEREDITARY INFLUENCES .	1
II. PREPARATORY SCHOOL LIFE	14
III. "AN EPOCH BOTH IN MIND AND HEART"	28
IV. THE MAN IN HIS MAKING AND MARRING	43
V. PREPARATIONS FOR A TWO-FOLD CAREER MATURED .	69
VI. THE NOVELIST ESTABLISHED	104
VII. THE BEGINNINGS OF LONDON LIFE	145
VIII. THE LITERARY AND POLITICAL PLATFORMS GAINED	180
IX. TEN YEARS OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE	203
X. THE SEPARATION, ITS CAUSE AND SEQUEL	224
XI. THE NOVELIST OF NATION AND EMPIRE	256
XII. A POLITICAL CONVERSION AND ITS SEQUEL	280
XIII. AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE	303
XIV. LAST YEARS AND THEIR WORK	329
INDEX	343

LIFE OF LORD LYTTON

CHAPTER I

EXPERT ESTIMATES AND HEREDITARY INFLUENCES

His place in an order of romance instituted by Sir Walter Scott—"The very highest genius"—What Thackeray really thought of "Sir Edwahd"—Dickens on *What Will He Do With It?*—J. A. Froude and Sir M. E. Grant-Duff on Bulwer-Lytton—Tennyson's acknowledgment—An interesting conversion—Lytton the product of his generation—Still more of his parentage and early training—"Justice" Bulwer—General Bulwer—Richard Warburton Lytton—Elizabeth Barbara Lytton—Her marriage with General Bulwer—Edward Bulwer's birth.

THE old-fashioned synonym for the novel—the *romance*—is specially applicable to the prose fiction, mastery in which forms the most enduring title to popularity not only of Edward Bulwer, the first Lord Lytton, but of those among his contemporaries who were, like him, the literary descendants of Sir Walter Scott. Following *The Border Minstrelsy*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and *The Lady of the Lake*, *Waverley* appeared just soon enough to preserve the poetry of the Scotch Highlands, and to hand it on inviolate to all time. The Red Indians were degenerating into an uninteresting condition, when they were saved by the glamour thrown over them by Fenimore Cooper. After the peace of 1815, the Navy might have lost some of its attractiveness for English boyhood but for the nautical stories of Captain Marryat; the sister service and its chief recruiting ground, Ireland, were parting with the charm of picturesqueness, when both began to be entertainingly idealized by Charles Lever. At the same

time Lever's life-long friend and partial disciple, Anthony Trollope, was preparing to raise the clerical profession above the prose of everyday life by depicting it in a light-comedy vein, as a theme for facetious fancy or satirical caricature. The novelist whom Trollope took for his master, Thackeray, by the social interiors of Temple Chambers in *Pendennis*, added a charm to the vicissitudes and interests of a barrister's career. But the chief effect of *Pendennis* on the intelligent and well-educated youth of the time was to open up a new and interesting profession, in the work of the writer for the daily paper and of the publisher's hack.

The subject of this monograph did not confine to any one class of subject or characters the medium through which he wished his readers to view human nature as he had found it, in all orders, in all countries, and at a great variety of historic periods. From the first, indeed, he took the reading world, and the popular taste, as he found them. At his earliest start, however, more markedly than had been done by literary predecessors, he showed himself essentially the romancist. Before Bulwer's career opened, Theodore Hook and Mrs. Gore had brought the silver-fork order of fiction into vogue; to the taste thus created Edward Bulwer appealed in *Pelham*. The personage, however, who gave his name to that work, was, in his day, a really original conception, with little family likeness to the conventional fops, fribbles, bullies, and bucks who make their exits and entrances through nine volumes of *Sayings and Doings*, or who swagger in and out of *Gilbert Gurney* and *Jack Brag*. Study and reverie sublimated Bulwer's dandy of the Regency into an Alcibiades, fitted by his natural gifts to advance philosophy and art, as well as to adorn clubs and drawing-rooms. *Pelham* had scarcely seen the light when its observant author noticed or foresaw the reaction towards realism that was to be at once gratified and stimulated by Charles

Dickens and Harrison Ainsworth. Bulwer, therefore, abandoned for a time the metaphysics and erotics of his earliest published attempt at fiction, *Falkland* (1827), and found his themes in the seamy side of everyday existence.

The closing parts of *Pelham* (1828) had, indeed, prepared his readers for something of this sort. Yet the realism of *Paul Clifford* does not prevent its being as much of a romance as, in virtue of its Wertherism, was the juvenile *Falkland*. In *Pelham* he had given tone and strength to the Regency buck, and had put the best of brains into the man about town. In *Paul Clifford* he illustrated the romance of highwaymanship ; so he had already, in *The Disowned* (1829), idealized the gypsies ; so was he afterwards to deal with the homicide in *Eugene Aram* (1832). Later on there will be occasion to trace this literary process in the works both of his maturity and his old age. Among, therefore, all those writers who, deriving their lineage from Sir Walter Scott, are rightly called *romancists*, and have redeemed by their pen some aspect of existence from commonplace, Bulwer would seem to be not merely conspicuous but unique. Writing during the thirties in one of the essays which, collected, form *The Student*, Bulwer calls the union of the noble and the shrewd the mark of the very highest genius ; it characterized, as he rightly says, Tacitus, Cervantes, and Shakespeare. He was guilty of no vanity when he claimed the same combination in himself.

In passing it has already been pointed out that what is called Thackeray's cynicism did not prevent his presenting, in *Pendennis*, an alluring romance of journalism ; that appeared just twenty years after Bulwer's satire on fashionable life, *Pelham*, had given Thackeray the opportunity of laughing at Bulwer's affectations and extravagances ; but neither Thackeray's *Punch* skit, *George de Barnwell*, by Sir E. L. B. L., Bart., nor the pen-and-ink caricatures of "Sir Edwahn Bulwig" dispersed

through his shorter pieces, prevented the author of *Penn-dennis* from genuinely appreciating the man who wrote *Pelham*. Of this it is in my power to give definite evidence which has never yet found its way into print, exactly as it was first communicated to me by Thackeray's friend, James Hannay, whom the great man had asked to annotate his lectures on the *English Humorists*. Thackeray's own words were: "So far from decrying him, I have the highest admiration for him; I would gladly give half of my reputation to be able to put the other half on a basis of scholarship and literature equal to Lytton's."

Not less deliberately eulogistic have been the words applied to Bulwer-Lytton by other practised authorities in the literary craft. Bulwer, I have already said, if not directly affected by Ainsworth and Dickens, readily admitted the influences of the time to which those writers had been subjected. His relation to Charles Lever, Anthony Trollope, and Wilkie Collins, was of the same kind as to Ainsworth and Dickens. The popularity attendant on the prose idylls of domestic life in the provinces had been exemplified by Trollope before and after he wrote *The Small House at Allington*, as well as in that story itself; Bulwer-Lytton, more than twenty years earlier, had decorated with his imagination the everyday experiences and characters of the home circle in *The Caxtons*. He returned to the same theme nearly a quarter of a century later, when in 1873 he published *Kenelm Chillingly*. *The Parisians*, a realistic romance of the second Empire, appealed to precisely the same interest as did Charles Lever's later works, and was written in much the same style. *What Will He Do With It?* following, as it did, *The Caxtons*, after less than a ten years' interval, drew from Charles Dickens a memorable tribute to its chief features—the constructive art displayed throughout the whole story, and the effective use of retrospect in alternation with dialogue. To the same effect testified Wilkie Collins:

"He beats one on one's own ground," deposed the author of *The Woman in White* as regards *The Strange Story* (1862).

In this department of literary sensationalism there have been few more expert performers than the Miss Braddon of *Lady Audley's Secret*, now Mrs. Maxwell. Bulwer-Lytton's first masterpiece in this kind of composition had long anticipated Wilkie Collins's best-known stories. *Lucretia, or The Children of the Night* (1846), as Mrs. Henry Wood and Mrs. Oliphant agreed with Mrs. Maxwell in thinking, was unsurpassed by any later writer as a romance of the modern supernatural and as a real "blood-curdler."

To pass to another phase of this many-sided, indefatigable industry. Thomas Carlyle, some nine years Bulwer's senior, admitted that only less praise belonged to Bulwer than to himself for feeding the popular appetite with the German culture which first came into demand during the earlier half of the Victorian Age. Carlyle's disciple, and eventually biographer, J. A. Froude, returned in 1892, as Modern History Professor, to the Oxford which he had last seen little less than half a century before. The worst sign he saw in the intellectual life of the new generation was the taste for the cheap new fiction. "Go," he said to his pupils, "back to Bulwer-Lytton. He may have had his literary weaknesses; still to read him would be to our young barbarians a kind of liberal education. There is," Froude would often say, "no other writer of our time, the force of whose imagination and the creative power of whose mind have grown so steadily throughout his whole course. He is really better now than in his youth; rich, ingenious, and vivid as was the fancy at work in *Zanoni* and *The Pilgrims of the Rhine*, *The Coming Race* strikes me all through as a higher effort than *The Pilgrims*, and at points fully up to the *Zanoni* mark."

A. W. Kinglake, Froude's equal in mastery of style, and even more keen and fastidious as a critic, had, as a young

man, learned from Samuel Rogers to see in Bulwer a poet who only just fell short of the highest place, who had no modern equal in rhyme as a satirist, and who had opened *The New Timon* with a couplet which, as Lord Houghton put it, would have been the despair of Pope and the admiration of Dryden :

O'er royal London in luxuriant May,
While lamps yet twinkled, dawning crept the day.

To another discriminating amateur of poetry, M. E. Grant-Duff, belongs the distinction of having, in the last quarter of the Victorian Age, rediscovered Bulwer-Lytton's great performances *The New Timon* and *St. Stephens*. Sir Mountstuart E. Grant-Duff was then living at York House, Twickenham. To the passages which he was fond of reading aloud from these two poems to his week's-end visitors, several still living owed their first acquaintance with Bulwer-Lytton as a master of verse not less than of prose. The personal experience of many others than the present writer will recall to them the effect produced by Sir Mountstuart's vocal rendering of his favourite passages describing John Hampden, Jonathan Swift, Charles Fox, William Pitt, Lady Hester Stanhope, Walpole, Melbourne, and O'Connell.

Tennyson may or may not have written the depreciatory epigram on Bulwer-Lytton that appeared in *Punch*, and is too familiar to quote ; it was not, however, intended for publication, and was only sent to the paper by John Forster. As a fact, Tennyson shared Thackeray's opinion of Bulwer's literature and scholarship. Moreover, Tennyson often conversationally admitted obligations to Bulwer : " I do not," he said, " forget that Bulwer-Lytton's Cambridge talks with me stimulated my early interest in the Round Table cycle, and that, ten years before any *Idylls of the King* were written, his twelve books of *King Arthur* helped to create the public taste for

my own writing on the same subject. Nor in his day did anyone do more towards intellectually raising the public, piquing its interest in better things, and enabling it to separate the wheat from the chaff."

One testimony more—that of a late convert to what, years earlier, he had pooh-pooed as "Bulwerism"; in 1836 Henry Reeve, of the *Edinburgh Review*, Privy Council, and *Greville Papers*, grumbled over the waste of an evening in chatting foppery with Bulwer, and ended by adding: "By the way, what trash his last book about Rienzi is!" A little over a quarter of a century afterwards, Reeve read *Caxtoniana*, published in 1863; "I confess," he said on closing the book, "I have done Bulwer-Lytton an injustice all my life;—how could I be prepared for the acumen, scholarship, shrewd observation, and good sense that have gone to produce these capital essays? Really more than once, while reading them, I have found myself applying to their writer the words borrowed from Quintilian's description of Messala's oratory, and applied by him to Bolingbroke's speaking: '*dignitatem quamdam præ se ferens in dicendo suam*.'"*

To pass from the estimate of experts to Bulwer-Lytton's standing with the public of to-day, any present revival of the popular taste for his writings still leaves him far less of a favourite than Dickens or Thackeray. From personal experience, however, the present writer can testify that in several parts of provincial England Bulwer-Lytton has still, not only readers, but students of his works. Some thirty years ago, the preparation of *England, Its People, Polity, and Pursuits* caused me to make a comprehensive and minute study of my native land throughout its length and breadth, in all counties and among all classes. Northumbrian miners and Midland artisans I then found to be well-acquainted with, not only Bulwer-Lytton's fictions, but the serious historical sketches contained in his essays

* *Caxtoniana*, p. 83. "Knebworth" edition of 1876, to which all references in this book are made.

and his *Athens*. To-day I have carefully enquired of the many friends I possess among the industrial orders in those English districts now referred to ; I have received in reply a score of communications to the same effect as that from a Birmingham gunsmith, whose letter contains these words : " Neither the lapse of time, nor the rising of new lights, has made any difference here in our appreciation of Bulwer-Lytton's stories and essays." In various cheap issues all Lord Lytton's fictions can be bought to-day for a few pence each. The widely-read favourites seem to be *The Last Days of Pompeii*, *Harold*, and *Ricni*. These three books, in this first decade of the twentieth century, are selling more largely than they have ever sold before. On the other hand, the market for complete sets of Bulwer-Lytton's novels has not gained in width and steadiness since his death.

The character, thought, life, and manners reflected in his books from first to last are those most distinctive of the various periods into which may be subdivided the sixty odd years intervening between the regency in England of the future George IV (1810), and the fall of the second Empire in France (1871). Of all the dispensations, political, social, even spiritual, under which he lived, he may be called the product. Above all things, however, in his temperament and career, he perpetuated the tendencies inherited from ancestors equally remarkable on both sides ; continuously from childhood he showed, alike in his personality and achievements, how strong were the moulding and even creative forces of early surroundings as well as of hereditary descent.

For these special reasons therefore the story of Bulwer-Lytton's life and work necessarily opens with some account of his ancestors. He combined two remarkably vigorous family strains, that of the Bulwers, and that of the maternal Lyttons. Bölver, Bölverk ; such are the ancient variants

of a patronymic, afterwards known as Bulwer, represented in Norfolk before the Norman Conquest, and still retained by the spot which, as Bulwerhithe, records the landing of Bulver the Dane. On his father's side, therefore, Bulwer-Lytton was neither Norman nor Saxon, but entirely of that northern stock which so long contested the supremacy of these islands with the Saxons. After 1066, the Bulwers received and settled themselves at Wood Dalling, which had been conveyed to them by one of the victorious Normans, Aymer de Valence. Dalling thus formed the East Anglian cradle of the family which, founded by Bolver de Dalling, eventually became known as Bulwer. About the middle of the seventeenth century, authorship was added to its traditions, and at the same time there was given a presage of the taste for magic and mysticism, seen in so many of Bulwer-Lytton's writings. This was the work of a certain learned and eccentric Dr. Bulwer; a mixture of the *savant* and the quack, he had not only studied the black art, but had written much about the influence of the heavenly bodies on human beings, the reading of character in the shape of the fingers, and of destiny in the lines of the hand. His most ambitious book had for its title *The Artificial Changeling*, and for its subject, anthropomorphosis, or the changes in the shape of the human body effected by invisible agencies. The subjects of Dr. Bulwer's speculations were matters of more than mere curiosity to the most illustrious of his nineteenth-century descendants, as the reading public first knew from the gypsy woman's interview with "Walter Lester" in *Eugene Aram*, and from the sinister shadow cast by the words and presence of "Dame Darkmans" upon the incidents and characters of that story. The cult of the supernatural inspiring Bulwer-Lytton's competition with Wilkie Collins in works like *A Strange Story* (1862) had, therefore, long been in the Bulwer blood.

More important to Edward Bulwer-Lytton than the legacy of Dr. Bulwer's phantasies was, early in the eighteenth century, a marriage which prepared for him his future birth-place, by bringing to the family their headquarters in Norfolk, Heydon Hall ; in addition to this, the Heydon property acquired by the union of the novelist's great-grandfather with the heiress of the Earles, placed the Bulwers in the front rank of Norfolk territorial houses. It also grafted fresh qualities of a higher kind upon that ancient and vigorous Danish stock. The second Heydon-Hall Bulwer, Bulwer-Lytton's paternal grandfather, was the admiration of the whole country-side, not only for his fine presence and handsome face, but for his endowments of mind as well as of person, for his keen judgment on the bench of magistrates as at quarter sessions, and, in addition to his local services, for a knowledge of the world acquired during foreign travels more extensive than were then often made. His loyalty to plain Whig principles, and the lavish hospitalities by which he propagated them, secured him the offer of a baronetcy if not of a peerage. His shrewdness in all county affairs, sagacious speech, and judicial temper, won for him the *sobriquet* of "the Justice" ; some of his personal traits were to be reflected by his descendant in "Mr. Lester," who with his two daughters figure in *Eugene Aram*. The Eugene Aram of real life had been, indeed, during "the Justice's" time, a schoolmaster at Lynn, and a frequent visitor to Heydon Hall, as well as a favourite with its master and the holiday tutor of his two daughters. Notable strangers of every kind who happened to be visiting the county, generally found their way to Heydon Hall. Among these guests was William Godwin, the author of *Caleb Williams* and of *Political Justice*.

Justice Bulwer's family consisted of four sons. Two of these took orders ; two went into the Army. Of all this group reminiscent glimpses may be caught here and there in

The Caxtons. As for the soldier brothers, John, conspicuously the heir of his father's good looks, convivial habits and feminine popularity, became the ornament of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland's viceregal court at Dublin in its gayest period; he married unhappily and died young. The other officer in due course developed into General William Earle Bulwer, the novelist's father. General Bulwer received his early education, as another Norfolk man, the great Lord Nelson, had done before him, at North Walsham Grammar School; thence he went to Cambridge, entering at what seems to have been a family college, Pembroke Hall; in Dr. Pretyman's lecture-room he sat next to the younger William Pitt. There the connection between the two ended; Chatham's austere and bookish son always remained a model undergraduate, Bulwer-Lytton's father soon became the leader of the fast, "rowing" set. Entering the Army without taking a degree, he had no sooner risen to the rank of colonel than the Earl of Buckinghamshire, whose Norfolk estate joined that of the Bulwers, offered him his daughter in marriage, with a view to uniting the two properties.

For the gay, good-looking officer honoured with this proposal there was, however, in store another union, destined afterwards to combine two honourable patronymics in a single famous name. Richard Warburton Lytton, the pupil at Harrow of Samuel Parr the great scholar, himself grew up to rank among the most learned men of his time, in Greek only below Porson, in Hebrew and other Oriental languages surpassed, if at all, only by Sir William Jones; of Hebrew, indeed, such was his mastery that he wrote, with a view to stage presentation, a play in the language. Alas, there were no Jews sufficiently versed in Hebrew to act it; even had there been, no audience, as a friend remarked, could have been collected to understand it; after its composition the play became as irrecoverably lost as

the book of Jasher. Descended from a long line of Hertfordshire landowners, Richard Warburton Lytton went in state as a gentleman commoner at Christ Church. There his most intimate friend was another undergraduate of the same order, Richard Paul Jodrell, whose sister eventually became Warburton Lytton's wife. The marriage proved unhappy; the husband was a man of pleasure as well as of letters. For his preoccupation with intellectual pursuits or material delights the lady consoled herself with the bustle and excitements of London life. Warburton Lytton married at twenty-two; he separated from his wife for ever about three years later. The scholar retired, not to his Hertfordshire property, but successively to various points of provincial seclusion. The lady, having obtained a sufficient alimony, found a London home in Upper Seymour Street. The one child of the marriage, a daughter, Elizabeth Barbara, subsequently Edward Bulwer-Lytton's mother, divided her time between her mother's London house, her father's retreats in the country, and different teaching establishments.

In everything to do with youthful instruction, Warburton Lytton's supreme authority was the author of *Sandford and Merton*, the best-known among English adherents to the educational methods of Rousseau. From that scheme revealed religion was, on principle, excluded. Yet while learning more from Thomas Day than at any of her regular schools, Warburton Lytton's daughter grew up a deeply religious woman. The timely corrective to the godless ethics of the French Revolution was supplied by a friend of Miss Lytton, a young lady some years older than herself, whose parents had settled in a good house near the modest abode to which her father had retired after the quarrel with his wife. The spiritual instructress of her girlhood remained Elizabeth Lytton's life-long friend; nor did Edward Bulwer-Lytton ever make light of the

religious instruction received by him as a consequence of this friendship at his mother's knee. A convinced Christian, Bulwer-Lytton, to quote his own words, had produced out of the ashes of materialism the philosophy of faith.* Among the visitors received by Warburton Lytton's separated wife in her London house was the member of a family which she had known in former years, the Norfolk Bulwers, on whose origin, personal fortunes, and ornaments, it has already been necessary to dwell at some length. This guest was in fact no other than the Colonel William Earle Bulwer who, it will be remembered, entered the Army after leaving Oxford. The scholar's daughter, Elizabeth Barbara Lytton, had now passed from a child into an exceedingly attractive young lady. Hence it was soon clear that Miss Lytton had been the chief cause of Colonel Bulwer's frequent appearances in Upper Seymour Street. The eighteenth century was just running out when the death of a mistress with whom he had long since become entangled left him for the first time a free man. He used his liberty to make Miss Lytton an offer of marriage. The young lady's mother was entirely on his side; she approved his suit and repeatedly pressed its acceptance on her daughter. Bulwer, however, was some years older than his proposed bride; moreover, Miss Lytton's affections had been at least once seriously pre-engaged by an admirer named Rawlins, whom, though she had given him up, she did not feel quite sure she could ever forget. After a year's courtship, checked more than once by difficulties that seemed to make the wooing hopeless, the much-sought young lady gave her final consent, and in the June of 1798 became Mrs. Bulwer. On May 25, 1803, the third son of this union, the subject of the present memoir, was born at 31 Baker Street.

* *The Student*, p. 254.

CHAPTER II

PREPARATORY SCHOOL LIFE

Death of General Bulwer—Incidents afterwards embodied in the novelist's works—Mrs. Bulwer takes her son to his grandfather's—What he learnt there—Death of Richard Warburton Lytton—Edward Bulwer's first school, and what he learnt *there*—Dr. Hooker's, Rottingdean—Rapid transition from childhood to manhood—The visit to Eton—Too old for school—No surrender!—"Home!"

WILLIAM and Elizabeth Bulwer's ancestry transmitted to their youngest son diverse influences destined through life dramatically to reflect themselves in his powerfully defined character and his variously successful career. His Danish forefathers, as strong and hard of fibre as the hard, grey weather of their native Norfolk, became great lords of the land in Norman Britain. They handed down to their posterity not only their own strength and swiftness in action, but the capacity for physical enjoyment and, as in the case of the already mentioned Dr. Bulwer, the bent towards speculative superstition that traditionally characterized the wandering tribes of northern Europe. In virtue, therefore, of paternal descent, Edward Bulwer, as his strong physiognomy proclaimed, was born ruler of men, and mystic. The vigorous Bulwer aptitudes were tempered by the gentler and more gracious tendencies of the maternal Lyttons, fitting him for the place he was to fill in letters and society. One of his own essays, contained in *The Student*, insists on the necessity of so much similarity between a writer and his works as almost to resolve authorship into autobiography.*

* *The Student*, p. 13, in the "Knebworth" edition.

Bulwer-Lytton's novels are none of them so rich in their writer's self-recollections as Dickens's *David Copperfield* or Thackeray's *Pendennis*; his shorter pieces, however, abound in accurate reminiscences of his experiences and feelings in the progress from infancy to boyhood, from youth to maturity. The two volumes of memoirs prepared by his son, the second Baron and the first Earl Lytton, could not be otherwise than rich in personal attraction, and from time to time will be resorted to in these pages. But even the copious extracts from the autobiography they contain do little more than clothe with the fullness and concrete reality of life the skeleton sketches and the instructive abstractions to be found in the most self-revealing of all his writings—the fugitive papers that make up *The Student*.

The first novel he published, *Falkland*, reflects not so much the adventures of actual life as the impressions and speculations belonging to certain phases of development, and the metaphysical studies or philosophical reading of his undergraduate days. The earliest of his successful books, *Pelham*, upon which at this point it would be premature to dwell, is largely a record of his daily doings on his introduction to fashionable life; it contains, however, in the dedication to his mother,* graceful and conclusive evidence of conscious obligation to the early home training. The central figure in *Eugene Aram*, which came some years after *Pelham*, was, we know already, a traditional acquaintance of the Bulwer family. As for the autobiographical element in *Pelham*, if the "Lady Frances" of this novel, who, to her husband's vexation, does *not* elope, derives any touches from the author's kin, they must have been suggested by the grandmother, Mrs. Lytton, who never appreciated her grandson, and who, it will be remembered, separated from her husband after three years

* Of the 1840 collected edition of his works, several other volumes also bore the same inscription.

of unsatisfactory union. The glimpses of family narrative, whether of Bulwerian or Lyttonian origin, that may be caught in the later novels belong to a later portion of this work.

From one point of view, the creature of family and home influences, Bulwer-Lytton, in a degree scarcely second to Byron himself, was the intellectual product of the French revolutionary period. His earliest reminiscences were those of England's possible invasion by the armed citizens of France; his father, then a general, was one of four officers who, in case of a French descent, were charged with the internal defence of the kingdom. Responsible for the military district round Preston, Lancashire, General Bulwer distinguished himself by the high efficiency and discipline of his troops, by his splendid hospitalities to the whole country-side, and by his bountiful charity to the poor; he had, moreover, raised, at his own expense, two regiments, one formed entirely of East Anglians, the other called the 106th or Norfolk Rangers. These services, added to the Bulwer influence and wealth in his county, entitled him to any reasonable reward from the Government of the day. The uncle of "Devereux," in Bulwer's novel of that name, with the wealth to support half a dozen peerages, had, like all of his line, always refused a title. Bulwer-Lytton's father, however, had long desired ennoblement by the style of Lord South Erpingham. Here, again, in a novel already mentioned, may be observed the family experiences of the author. "Constance Vernon," on whom are set the hero's affections, becomes, in *Godolphin*, the Earl of *Erpingham's* wife.

Death alone prevented the fulfilment of what General Bulwer's public services rendered a legitimate ambition. Hereditary gout, after prostrating him with pain, threatened the vital parts. To maintain his ebbing strength the doctors ordered wine. "Let it not be," groaned the sick

man, "my old Madeira, which won't hold out three years longer as it is. And now bring me some tea." Such proved to be William Bulwer's last words. Mrs. Bulwer went to fulfil his wish; on her return to the room, drawing the bed-curtain to give her husband the cup, she saw his favourite dog seated on the pillow beside the master, whose pulse had stopped for ever.*

The strong, coarse Danish texture of the Bulwers was that of the old Northern Vikings, whose presence in the flesh they seemed, in maturity and old age, so strikingly to reproduce. A certain delicate refinement formed the hereditary attribute of the Lyttons. General Bulwer—rough, imperious, choleric—had nothing in common with the sensitive, gently bred lady whom his death had left a widow. She now had to turn woman of business, and arrange for the present and future of her sons. The passion of "joining house to house, and laying field to field," and the style kept up at Heydon, as well as in the Lancashire command, were found unexpectedly to have reduced William Bulwer's estate. Mrs. Bulwer, acting on the family advice, applied to the Court of Chancery, and obtained the guardianship of her children with a due allowance for their education. Her eldest son, William, went to a preparatory school; the second, the future diplomatist, Sir Henry Bulwer, was quartered on his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Warburton Lytton; the third, Edward, lived alone with his mother. He had been from the first his mother's favourite. The tenderness with which the boy requited her affection had always been deepened by something more than a suspicion that his stern father grudged him his undue share in the maternal love. Mrs. Bulwer's learned father still survived. With him, wherever he might be, she and her boy

* The touching details of this death-bed scene here given are from the account introduced by Bulwer-Lytton himself into one of his shorter pieces.—See *The Student*, p. 284.

passed a portion of each year. Lord Beaconsfield's familiar phrase of self-remembrance, "born in a library," might be paralleled by Edward Bulwer's childhood beneath his grandfather's roof. Warburton Lytton's Ramsgate home was less a dwelling-place than the receptacle for an overflowing tide of books. They filled the living-rooms; they flooded the passages; in fine weather they covered the back and front gardens. To this house, in the hands of another tenant, Edward Bulwer was to return as private pupil.

Duly recorded in the already mentioned autobiography, Edward Bulwer's home experiences immediately after his father's death, as they are now recalled, did not find their way into any of his minor writings. They provided him with some suggestions, personal as well as general, in *The Caxtons* and in *What Will He Do With It?* though even here it is only at certain angles that glimpses may be caught of the individuals and surroundings amid which he grew up. This stage of his youth was far from being altogether happy; his mother's unvarying love and never-failing care alone prevented it from being altogether miserable. She it was who created all the joy of his home life. Of his Bulwer relatives in their Norfolk home he seems to have heard little and to have known less. His brothers he knew as kinsmen, not as playmates. His father has been seen to have felt a sort of jealousy of the extent to which he monopolized his mother's thoughts. A like sentiment now possessed his grandmother. Mrs. Lytton, in fact, so disliked the boy that she could not bear him in her sight. Thus it came about that no other family door opened to him besides that of his grandfather at the Kentish watering-place.

Warburton Lytton sometimes mingled discipline and even chastisement with hospitality. In one of the rooms at Knebworth there might formerly, perhaps still may, be seen,

just above the mantelpiece, the same kind of ornament as decorates the Eton headmaster's study, given him by the captain of the school to signify the boys' absolute submission of themselves to his corrective hand—a birch rod tied up with the Eton light blue ribbon. How a like article came to be displayed near a Knebworth chimney-corner the author of *The Caxtons* has himself explained. His mother having been called away at the time, most of his sixth year was passed with his grandfather alone in the Ramsgate house. It was the time of the ill-starred Walcheren expedition under the second Lord Chatham. A young officer who had taken part in it, on his return to England, being at Ramsgate, visited Warburton Lytton. He brought with him a highly decorated sword, which entirely fascinated his host's grandchild; after dinner the weapon could nowhere be found; the appropriative instinct of the ancestral Danish pirates had, in fact, asserted itself, and the boy had secreted the cutlass as a prize of war in what he thought was a safe hiding-place. A little later "Master Teddy" saw the male factotum of the establishment with something in his hand that looked to the child's eye very like a broom; it was not, however, as he thought, for Sarah the housemaid—it was for Master Teddy himself. The child only sank into his first sound sleep to be awakened by a mingled sensation of horror and cold. On being aroused, he saw all the bed-clothes on the floor and his grandfather holding over him the thing which he had mistaken for a part of the room-cleaning gear. The rest is silence; the flagellator did not condescend to remonstrate on or even to specify the offence; the subject of his operations did not realize the enormity of his crime till, some days later, his mother, on her return, gently chid him for the theft and falsehood that had brought him the flogging. "If," by way of reply murmured the future author of *Paul Clifford*, "I had another chance, I

should take the sword again and hide it in a safer place." "This object-lesson in the distinction between mine and thine," Bulwer-Lytton always closed the reminiscence, "was the only gift I ever received from my grandfather's hands. But," he sometimes added, "he gave me, unconsciously, several hints for *Pisistratus Caxton's* father."

Literary tastes had no more been wanting than intellectual strength to the Bulwers. The future novelist's natural turn for scholarship and study may be directly referred to his Lytton grandfather. So too the mother whose judgment secured the success of her sons in their respective callings specially imparted her taste for reading to her third boy and nourished his early love of romance with those Percy ballads which awoke, as from the grave, the decaying spirit of national song. At the same time she cultivated his ear for rhyme with the smooth couplets of Pope. Mrs. Bulwer also herself possessed a pretty knack of verse, and stimulated her son's childish muse by little compositions of her own. Before completing his seventh year Edward Bulwer had started on his own account in epic and elegy. In the former he took for his hero Henry V, the earliest of his gentler efforts was a birthday tribute to a young lady, a few years his senior, named Rose.

Within twelve months of these effusions seeing the light an apoplectic stroke suddenly carried off, in 1810, the epicurean recluse of Ramsgate. Besides the lands and the money which placed his daughter among the wealthiest women in London, Warburton Lytton transmitted to his grandson other endowments not only as appreciable, but as important as those inherited by the boy from his Bulwer grandfather. Both these progenitors were, in nearly the same degree, men of strong and original character. In respect of sheer intellectual power, the less learned man of the world, Justice Bulwer, probably ranked above the scholar, Warburton Lytton; in each the same power of firm and

quick action went together with a turn for speculative enquiry and the habit of sustaining long efforts of abstract thought. Edward Bulwer's grandfathers, therefore, combined in themselves the qualities that, passing to their descendant, predestined him to great achievements in letters as in politics. Nor must we overlook the unconventional though firm faith in the Christian revelation, and the satisfaction with learning for its own sake, a legacy from Warburton Lytton, refined and strengthened by his mother's care. When all this is borne in mind, surprise cannot be felt if the material with which Edward Bulwer's schoolmasters and tutors had to deal not only filled them with a sense of the leading part he was to take in the movements of his generation, but, at an early stage of their experiences, made them feel he was a good deal beyond their powers of management.

For the present, however, his education was to be conducted at home by himself through agencies that, like his capacity to profit by them, were a Lytton gift. He was now (1809) living with his mother at a house in Nottingham Place, Marylebone, for which had been exchanged one in Montague Square, a gift from Mrs. Bulwer's father. To Nottingham Place Warburton Lytton's library, after his death, was brought. Its arrival, to the precocious, eager spirit of the boy, opened the doors of the universal knowledge he had secretly panted for. It was as if an omnipotent good genius of the *Arabian Nights*, anticipating the unuttered wish of the child, had, by a wave of his hand, disclosed some hidden recess where there were ranged, in vista after vista, or piled heap upon heap, the literary treasures of all countries and of all ages. Prominent among them were histories or legends, splendidly illustrated by great artists and engravers, of Eastern potentates in their seraglio, encircled by queens and princesses of matchless beauty from Armenia and Cashmere. Side by side with these stood Englished treatises on chivalry

and knighthood, such as might have fired the fancy of another Don Quixote. Edward Bulwer, in fact, had only gone half through Southey's version of *Amadis of Gaul* when he quite decided on being a soldier. Then there were other translations of those German metaphysicians who summed up all knowledge and all being in the consciousness of one's own existence. Freshly inspired by these sages, the young philosopher, still not quite eight years of age, one day put the question : "Pray, mamma, are you not sometimes overwhelmed by the sense of your own identity?" "My dear Teddy," was the answer given, "it is high time for you to go to school."

In 1812, therefore, having now reached his ninth year, Edward Bulwer was sent to Dr. Ruddock's preparatory institution for young gentlemen at Fulham. Here his stay was as short as it was unsatisfactory; subjected to the ordeal of "bumping" in the playground by way of welcome on his arrival, he was afterwards systematically bullied out of happiness, spirits, and health. So worn and ill did he become and look before he had been in the place a fortnight that his frightened mother, upon one of her weekly visits, removed him for good. One wholesome lesson learned at this juvenile hotbed of cruelty and vice wrote itself indelibly on the boy's mind; he carried away with him a life-long loathing of meanness and tyranny. His next school was Dr. Curtis's, at Sunbury. Here he had for his most distinguished schoolfellow his elder brother, the future Sir Henry Bulwer. Neither here nor at a certain Dempster's, on the Grand Parade, Brighton, did he learn anything except one or two childish games. Many years later, presiding at a dinner given to Charles Dickens before his American visit in 1867, Bulwer-Lytton referred to these boyish days at Brighton. In his pantaloons, he said, and a general air of puffy dignity, Mr. Dempster might have suggested *Dombey's* "Dr. Blimber."

The next educational move involved no removal from the Brighton district, and was to a school that enjoyed, in the days of the Regency, the same fashionable vogue as belonged, in the Victorian era, to "Tabor's," at Cheam. (Dr.) Hooker's, Rottingdean, was confined to boys socially Edward Bulwer's equals; they were well-fed, well-cared for generally, and excellently taught. A certain lordliness of manner and dress won for the new boy the nickname "Prince Bulwing." Hearing of this many years later, Thackeray, in some of the literary caricatures already referred to, by the omission of a single letter turned it into the "Bulwig" to amuse the early readers of *Punch*. At Hooker's the lad's versatile cleverness, precocious knowledge, and literary turn made their mark; he was always the best scholar. Soon, in a school magazine which he started, he dawned upon the school world as a poet. "First in the class," to anticipate his own words about the fourteenth Lord Derby, he showed himself "foremost in the ring." There was no boy from whom he ever would "take a licking"; he used his fists so well that his senior, the bully of the playground, gave in after a set-to of twenty minutes. His teachers were as deeply impressed as his schoolfellows; the half-year report told his mother of her son's physical and intellectual power, demanding for their display a larger field than any private school could offer. Eton, clearly, was the proper place for one who, as his Rottingdean preceptor said, had it in him to become a very remarkable man. From Dr. Hooker's he carried away not only a physical constitution thoroughly recovered from the effects of ill-usage at the Fulham school, but a disciplined, for his years a fairly filled mind, a habit of intellectual concentration, and a power of doing long spells of really hard work. His Rottingdean days were also destined permanently to influence, if not his literary, his typographical taste. Dr. Hooker had an inordinate fondness

for capital letters ; his pupil was often rallied in later life for continuing to make that peculiarity his own.

Some three years after his heart had been stirred, as with a trumpet, by the news of Waterloo, Edward Bulwer left Rottingdean, bound, as it then seemed certain, for Eton.

The boy was not only the father of the man ; in miniature he was the man already. Before reaching his later teens he had begun on system to act up to an ideal distinctively evolved from his childish reading or meditation. This was the "complete gentleman," distinguished not more by intellectual than physical prowess, exemplified by Herbert of Cherbury, or the Admirable Crichton, in the sixteenth century, and revived in the first quarter of the nineteenth by the better sort of Georgian macaronis and bucks who kept up their classics and dabbled in letters. Thus it had become a point of honour with Edward Bulwer while yet a schoolboy practically to illustrate the lessons he had learned from reading *Amadis of Gaul*. He did so by engaging, in true knightly fashion, bigger boys than himself in fisticuffs, as well as, in less strenuous moments, by turning stanzas to juvenile loves prematurely snatched away, and to maidens, frohesome or meditative, that survived. The time for handling the rapier or pistol had not yet come ; but long before Edward Bulwer went to Cambridge he had, in every way to his own satisfaction, graduated with honours in the school of the world. Still, even a youth of his brilliant and cultivated precocity could not well make an actual start in life at the age of fifteen.

He did not, therefore, openly oppose practical compliance with his Rottingdean tutor's advice, and even consented to accompany his mother on a visit to Eton, ostensibly with a view of entering the school ; in that direction, however, he went no further than to the headmaster's study. Not, indeed, as some of his critics have assumed, that any neglect of Latin versification in his

preparatory training might have placed him in a lower form than would have been proper to his age and general acquirements. On the contrary, he wrote so good a copy of sapphics on the subject set him by Dr. Keate during this interview—spring—as to win unaccustomed praise from the headmaster. Edward Bulwer, therefore, failed to become an Etonian, from no deficiency in distinctively Eton accomplishments, but simply because he had privately determined to go to no public school at all. The truth is, his courage and strong will did not prevent his being exceedingly shy, self-conscious, and even morbidly sensitive. Eton might or might not have removed these blemishes from his character. At any rate, in after life he felt he was mistaken in not having made the experiment, and in depriving himself of the opportunities and discipline which had been those of nearly all the men with whom he associated. *Pelham*, indeed, published 1828, mentions Eton only to disparage it. A footnote appended to the Knebworth edition, 1873, admits the great improvement in the educational system of public schools since *Pelham's* day, and favours the view that “institutions more philosophical in theory than Harrow and Eton would fail so well to secure the union of classical taste with manly habits which distinguishes the English gentleman.” *

Socially, this boy of fifteen was already, in his own opinion, a finished gentleman ; intellectually, he seemed to himself a Dante already ripe for Beatrice, or a Tasso justly impatient at the non-arrival of Laura. The Edward Bulwer of those days, therefore, looked upon a public school as an anachronism not less than an insult. Still, there was a conventional routine of learning to be pursued, necessitating, for the present, recourse to a private tutor. A preceptor sufficiently equipped for a pupil so formidable could not at a moment's notice be found. While at home the youth

* *Pelham*, p. 11.

restricted his reading to current fiction from the circulating libraries. Mrs. Bulwer, therefore, finding her son get out of hand, decided that some intermediate place of teaching must be found. This was forthcoming in a suburban establishment; there the new boy soon found himself equally above both the teachers and the taught. Drudgery with figures was below his dignity. In the ingenious arts and humane letters, which were alone worthy of a gentleman's notice, he always knew more than any one else in the place.

Looking back upon his days at Dempster's in the Grand Parade, Brighton, Edward Bulwer, it has been said, saw a resemblance between that school and the Blimbers of *Dombey and Son*. At the suburban academy which followed the Rottingdean Hooker's he showed a temper which might have supplied Dickens with a model for Steerforth at Salem House in *David Copperfield*; here he also justified afresh Dr. Hooker's view of the public school as alone offering a field large enough for his overflowing vitality. The usher bullied by Steerforth bore the name of Mell. The Mell of Edward Bulwer's suburban school had dared to report young Bulwer's insubordination to the headmaster. There then entered the arch pedagogue, a tall, gaunt, lame man, of a stern Cameronian countenance, with a cast in his eye. As a step to restoring order, he actually dared to give Master Bulwer a box on the ear. Now ensued an incident related at full length in *The Student*,* and evidently suggesting the personal encounter of the boy Godolphin in the novel of that name with the schoolmaster, Dr. Shallowell.† The boy who would never take a licking from a schoolfellow was not slow to return the blow to the master. A pitched battle between the two was only prevented by the refractory scholar being walked out of the schoolroom by the ruler of the establishment into an

* *The Student*, p. 233.

† *Godolphin*, p. 23.

almost uninhabited parlour ; without saying a word the mortally offended preceptor turned on his heel and left him to two days of solitary confinement—his food being mysteriously put in by an invisible hand through a half-open door, and his bed being made up on a black horse-hair sofa. At first literary consolation was allowed him in the shape of Beloe's *Sexagenarian*. That solace, however, was soon removed, and the prisoner had no companion but his own thoughts. On the third morning his mother, terrified by the sentence of expulsion passed on her son, arrived in her carriage. Hardening himself in impenitence, the boy volunteered no apology which might have had the effect of revoking the fatal sentence ; he merely walked out of the house with his mother, handed her into the carriage, and called to the coachman, "Home !" The incident had closed itself ; the school days were at an end ; passing in a twelvemonth over a world of feelings, the child had suddenly risen into the man.

CHAPTER III

(1819-25)

“AN EPOCH BOTH IN MIND AND HEART”

A new stage in life and experience for Edward Bulwer—His premature development—The great value of the instruction, classical, political, oratorical, and physical, which he received at Mr. Wallington's—The appearance of *Ismael*—First love—Its course does not run smooth—The tragic close—Effect on Bulwer—Further parallel between his life and works—Mr. Thomson's—Bulwer's preference for private study—Entrance at Trinity, Cambridge, where the preference is confirmed, causing his migration to Trinity Hall—His private historical studies—The good influence of Alexander Cockburn—Bulwer's speeches at the Union—Macaulay's knowledge Bulwer's inspiration—Other contemporaries.

THE educational adventures already related were now to be followed, in Edward Bulwer's own words, by an epoch both in mind and heart; in 1819 began what he always looked back upon as his real awakening to the knowledge of books and also of himself.* At the age of sixteen, he took his place among the six private pupils prepared for the universities by an Ealing clergyman, Charles Wallington, a scholarly, well-bred, dignified, and urbane Oxford Anglican of the pre-Tractarian school. The era now opening for the Ealing tutor's new pupil was to have an abiding and decisive influence upon his whole future. Two years at Ealing (1819-21) witnessed his progress to a point in general experience, in moral, in intellectual, in physical development, almost in the knowledge of books as well as of character, scarcely less advanced than that at which, undergraduateship as well as pupillage both over, he began, in 1825, life on his own account. In all its aspects,

* *The Student*, p. 35, "Knebworth" edition.

strictly educational, quite as much as psychological, the short interval between the completion of Edward Bulwer's sixteenth and eighteenth years proved so fruitful of results as to necessitate something more than a general characterization. Personally, the subject of the present sketch had quite outgrown the raw greenness of boyhood. Only the finishing touches, eventually administered by the master hand of the Oxford scholar under which he came in 1819, were wanted to improve Edward Bulwer into a full-fledged poet and philosopher, as well as the accomplished man about town. The visible proofs of his early maturity were supplied not only by the fine, strong features of the already whiskered and mustachioed face, but by a certain dignity of manner and composure of bearing, particularly by a presence of mind that was certainly the most sustained and impressive of all his qualities. Here he exactly presaged his own "Devereux" in the novel of that name published ten years later (1829), who, in this respect, reflected the author himself, and who, at an age when boys have not generally renounced hopscotch and marbles, as one of the most irresistible dandies on the town was *au mieux* with a fair peeress at least twelve years his senior.

Latin and Greek, as to so many other boys, had seemed to Edward Bulwer the mere inventions of some enemy to youthful happiness, involving certain special ordeals of torture in the way of construing, parsing, learning by heart, and other such exercises. At Wallington's he began to realize that the two classical tongues not only had a literature of their own, but were the keys wherewith to unlock, understand, and explain the treasures of thought, expression, and style handed down to the present by writers of all time. The teaching received by Bulwer at Wallington's was much that sometimes given to a promising sixth-form boy by a crack and careful private tutor at a public school. The lectures at Ealing especially on the Greek

dramatists illustrated the compositions of Shakespeare and all the modern masters. The elegant and sympathetic Oxford teacher exalted the crabbed sentences breathing of lexicons and grammars into the freshness and glory of the poet. Euripides, the earliest author treated by the teacher in this manner, first taught Bulwer to burn, in his own words, over the dreams of fiction, and in after life, was read by him more often even than Shakespeare. In other words, Edward Bulwer now and hereafter studied the poets, philosophers, and historians of Greece and Rome, not as subjects for examination, but as models of language and argument. At Ealing he also began to understand that not alone in the days of Pericles and Augustus was much well worth reading and remembering written at Athens and Rome. Thus his scholarship acquired a freshness as well as a range which at Eton or Harrow it would have lacked.

Other lessons equally outside the conventional course, and equally useful, were learned by this most remarkable of Mr. Wallington's pupils. From his grandfather, Warburton Lytton, he had imbibed some political ideas so advanced as to have the French Revolutionary flavour. Mr. Wallington now acquainted him with the thought and wisdom of the opposite side, thoroughly imparting to him before he left his house the principles of High Toryism in Church and State. The "Henry Pelham" of Bulwer's second novel owed to his uncle, Lord Glenmorris, the rudiments of political philosophy, as of economical and other knowledge, which formed his intellectual stock-in-trade when he started in politics. Here may be traced an autobiographical reminiscence of the author's obligations at an earlier period than his hero's to his Ealing tutor.* In addition to the general stimulating and instructive influences of his talk, Mr. Wallington took great interest in a debating society established by his boys; he encouraged

* *Pelham*, pp. 148-9 and sq.

it regularly with his presence; sometimes he mingled in its discussions. Himself possessing a fine voice, used by him with great skill and effect, he took a pride in turning out his scholars good elocutionists. An orator of all but the very front rank Edward Bulwer afterwards became. That accomplishment, and the overcoming incidental to it of a certain thickness in pronunciation, he always placed to the credit of “Wallington’s.” The Ealing tutor believed in the Socratic combination of “music and gymnastic”; he therefore secured Henry Angelo, who had taught Byron, as Edward Bulwer’s fencing-master. “My new pupil,” Angelo was soon able to report, “is becoming a first-rate performer with the foils.” Bent upon fitting his show scholar for distinction in senate, in *salon*, in camp, even on Parnassus itself, Wallington judiciously encouraged the young poet. The habit of verse-writing begun, as has been seen, in his earliest childhood, had since then been continued. As a consequence, before the time now reached the budding bard had in his portfolio ready for the press a whole sheaf of poems; of these the longest and most important was *Ismael, an Oriental Tale*. This, after being admired by Wallington, was shown to Warburton Lytton’s Harrow friend, the famous scholar Samuel Parr. He, too, thought it so good as to advise publication. The result was a little volume of verses with Edward Bulwer’s name on the title page, published by Hatchards in 1820.

The heart as well as the mind was, according to his own confession, vitally concerned in the critical experiences between 1819 and 1821. Disappointment in first love was attended by circumstances so exceptionally harrowing in themselves and tragical in their consequences that for years he felt their blighting and withering influence. The story has been differently told, but of the central facts there seems little doubt. During Bulwer’s youth, Ealing was a picturesque and rural spot; a little way outside it

ran a prettily wooded stream, in whose waters Edward Bulwer used to bathe, and on whose banks he dreamed away the summer day. He was soon to meet the presiding naiad of the place in a young lady numbering seventeen years to his sixteen, Lucy D——, who lived with her father in the neighbourhood. A formal introduction from a common friend began an acquaintance that soon developed into a mutual passion. Reviewing the whole affair some fifteen years later, the lover mentions the haunting qualities of a face which, alike in sleeping and waking moments, had never left him since he first saw it. The girl's natural protector, a gambler, a debauchee, and scamp, was often absent for weeks together from the cottage where he and his daughter lived. The father's misconduct had doomed his wife to death of a broken heart. The motherless girl had no friend of her own sex except a neighbouring lady with whom she sometimes stayed. Her beauty and helplessness drew out towards her all that was chivalrous and tender in Edward Bulwer's strong, passionate nature. The two were all in all to each other; they met at short intervals.

There came a day on which Lucy D—— appeared at the trysting-place in tears, and at first unable to speak for weeping. Her father had just told her to prepare for breaking up their country home, and perhaps leaving England for ever. Shortly, however, after this, resolved on making Lucy his wife, Edward Bulwer obtained an interview with the father. Knowing this man for a scoundrel, he had expected to see a person of fierce or sullen appearance, and to meet with a rough reception. Instead, he found Mr. D—— remarkable for grace generally and polish of manner, with a soft, bland voice, a courteous and attentive ease of deportment, improved rather than impaired by his habits of deceiving others. At a later visit, the exterior calm of Mr. D——'s good breeding was strangely

ruffled ; his manly heart was overcome ; he hid his weeping face with his hands. Between his sobs he could only just articulate his danger of immediate arrest for debt. A young gentleman of Edward Bulwer's station had no difficulty in at once raising the considerable sum needed for securing the personal liberty and home of Lucy's father. It had, however, clearly become desirable for Mr. Wallington's brilliant pupil, now of university age, to leave so dangerous a neighbourhood. Family action and influence completed the arrangements necessary for an immediate change of scene. After a short absence the young man again found his way to the cottage ; it was shut up, and empty ; the old woman who opened the door could only say that father and daughter were gone, none knew whither.

The resolve inspired by this disappointment was to trace the young lady to the end of the world, in defiance of family objections to marry her the instant she was found. The enamoured and infuriated youth found other arrangements had been made for him. Before qualifying for matriculation at Cambridge, Edward Bulwer passed a little time in London. The thoroughfare connecting Piccadilly with the eastern corner of Leicester Square was then lined by shabby gaming-houses. Entering one of these on a certain night, the despairing lover saw at the roulette table the “marked and working” countenance of the man he desired to make his father-in-law. “Lucy” was the only word he could utter on coming up to the gambler when he had left the room. “You know, of course, she is married,” was the reply given to Bulwer with a paternal enquiry after his own health. Justly, it would seem, convinced of his sweetheart's constancy, Edward Bulwer, having cursed the father, was threatening him with violence, but after an angry scene let him depart. The young man never saw the object of his passion again. To anticipate for a moment the sequel, having heard of her death, he made a pilgrimage

to her tomb in the Lake district during his home travels in 1824.

In narrative passages and in sketches of character, Bulwer drew so largely from his own experiences and reflections that his novels and essays are often quite as valuable for their self-revelations as the chapters of formal autobiography in his son's memoirs. Most of the episode just recorded had been talked over by him with his intimate friend John Forster. That distinguished man of letters considered the account in *The Student* of a youthful passion that miscarried, substantially to be a transcript of what had happened to Bulwer himself. Hence my general adhesion to the story as it was told, though not ostensibly of himself, by Bulwer, in *The New Phædo*.* Forty years after that was penned he recurs, though not by name, in the last of his novels *Kenelm Chillingly* (1873), to the different stages in the progress of juvenile attachment. The love scenes and incidents in *Kenelm Chillingly* possess, indeed, no close resemblance to what he had gone through himself. The charm of the passages dealing in *Kenelm Chillingly* with a boy's passion and courtship lies in the sympathetic force and freshness of the writer's touch; these qualities are themselves a proof that the experiences described had not only once been the author's own, but that through a long and busy life they were seldom without a place in his mind.

After the antithetical moralizings and cynical pleasantries of *Pelham*, the reflections in Bulwer's novels are often in the gloomiest vein of Byronic pessimism, sometimes so disconnected apparently with the context as to suggest his having been suddenly carried away by thoughts of overpowering gloom. There is no reason why, as those who knew him best thought, this may not have been among the literary effects of his boyhood's love tragedy.

* *The Student*, pp. 208-15.

Meanwhile, in 1821 the Ealing period would naturally have come to an end. Mr. Wallington had hoped his pupil would go to Oxford; that, as it turned out, sufficed to secure the selection of Cambridge. Of the desolating experiences recently sustained by her son's heart, Mrs. Bulwer seems to have known nothing. She only saw in his unamiable humours and sullen dejection evidence of Mr. Wallington's mismanagement. The tutor, therefore, himself an Oxonian, had no sooner ventured to recommend his own university (which it will be remembered was also that of her father and husband) than Mrs. Bulwer insisted on her son's proceeding, with all possible despatch, to Cambridge. Edward Bulwer, unfortunately, knew nothing of mathematics; he now, therefore, had to acquire enough of algebra and Euclid for matriculation at Trinity. That necessity brought him once more to the house at Ramsgate in which, as a child, he had so often visited his grandfather Lytton. It was now occupied by a trainer for the Cam named Thomson. To the youths already in his charge Edward Bulwer, for a short time in 1821, was added. The Kentish watering-place had then recently come into fashion; after his daily studies Mr. Thomson's new pupil took evening amusement at dances and card parties. He therefore found it convenient to have his sleeping-chamber in the town, away from his tutor's roof. The only instruction about which he now had to trouble himself was elementary mathematics, for in 1821, at the age of eighteen, he could floor any classical papers. The real intellectual importance of his stay at Ramsgate was not the reading he did with his tutor, but the influence of the writers to whose spell he was now subject. The *Confessions* of Rousseau, read in a rather clumsy translation, stripped, therefore, of the literary charm that fascinates in the original, disgusted rather than attracted him. Nor till some years later, reading the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Reveries* in French, did he appreciate

Rousseau as a writer, while detesting his sentiment as fortunately obsolete but not on that account the less nauseous.

Without, therefore, serious exertion,* he soon picked up at Ramsgate all he wanted for entering at Cambridge. Here he had been preceded by his two brothers. Henry Bulwer, though afterwards he resumed residence, was not then "up." The personality which most strongly impressed Edward Bulwer in his freshman's term was that of W. M. Praed, with his pale cheeks and large eyes, who, then a new-comer from Eton, had already begun, by his wit and eloquence, to fill the same place among his contemporaries at college as, without any apparent effort, he had won at school. Praed, who was afterwards to be Edward Bulwer's contemporary in Parliament, has his niche in Bulwer's poem *St. Stephen's*,* but at Cambridge the contemporaries Bulwer knew best were the future Lord Chief Justice Cockburn and another ornament of the Bar, Robert Hildyard. His chief companion seems to have been the future diplomatist, who died Lord Dalling, his brother, then Henry Bulwer—when, that is, he happened to be in the place; for he seems seldom to have used his rooms at the fastest of Cambridge colleges, Downing, except when he had business more important than academic at Newmarket.

After his brother went down, Edward Bulwer yielded to a long-growing disgust with university life. At Trinity he was without an undergraduate friend; he had fallen foul of

* An earlier tribute is to Charles Buller; then comes Praed:—

More richly gifted, though to him denied.
 Ev'n thine imperfect honours, Winthrop died;
 Died—scarce a promise of his youth redeem'd,
 And never youth more bright in promise seem'd.
 Granta beheld him with such loving eyes
 Lest the light lance that struck at every prize;
 What the last news?—the medal Praed has won,
 What the last joke?—Praed's epigram or pun.
 And every week, that club-room famous then,
 Where striplings settled questions spoil'd by men,
 When grand Macaulay sat triumphant down,
 Heard Praed reply, and longed to halve the crown.

the tutors, especially the one of whom he saw most, a future Archbishop of York, Thomas Musgrave, a rude and coarse man as he was thought by his pupil. He had liked his rides with his brother Henry, he had his Union triumphs, he relished work, provided he could do it at his own time and in his own way. Good came out of evil. Determined to dispel a growing listlessness of mind by finding some object of intellectual interest, he at last fixed upon English history. Taking Rapin for his groundwork, he raised on that foundation a structure of solid knowledge from materials supplied by the original authorities whom that chronicler consulted. In this way he made careful excursions into a vast extent of ancient documents and rare biographies. Here might have been seen in the making not only the historical scholar, but the historical novelist. The notes of what he read, and the abridgment of whole books, were carefully kept at hand for reference when he was writing ; they provided the nucleus of fact necessary for *Devereux*, *Rienzi*, and *The Last of the Barons*. These studies affected his movements at Cambridge. They supplied intellectual training and literary equipment which determined his occupation and coloured his tastes when his college days were done.

To the greatest of Bulwer's contemporaries Trinity and the learning of which it was redolent constituted an earthly paradise ; Bulwer himself found it a solitary cell endurable only by the private reading in which the college tutors gave him no help. Shy, morbidly self-conscious, and self-centred, even more perhaps in youth than in later life, he was as little fitted for a large college like Trinity as he had known himself to be for a public school such as Eton.

He stayed at Trinity only a few months. When his second Cambridge term began he had, with his mother's reluctant consent, migrated to Trinity Hall ; there, as a fellow-commoner, he could cut lectures to his heart's content.

He had thus his mornings to himself; with an inspiring sense of liberty and independence, unmolested by tutors, he could read his favourite authors and work out for himself the problems they suggested. In another way the Trinity Hall period was to prove memorable. Hitherto Bulwer's most intelligent companion of about his own age had been his eldest brother William, who himself shared in the family turn for literature, qualified, however, by an eldest son's disinclination for settled work; Henry Bulwer had not then given much evidence of his real abilities. The Trinity Hall contemporary, a fellow-commoner like himself, who was the one intimate friend that Bulwer possessed, now became instrumental in stimulating him to real exertion. This was Alexander Cockburn; at the Cambridge Union he had already given promise of the distinction afterwards achieved by him at the Bar and in Parliament before eventually becoming Lord Chief Justice. Cockburn's example and persuasion alone induced Bulwer to join the famous debating society, whose chief lights were Macaulay and Praed, and whose weekly meetings were held in a room near the "Red Lion," in Petty Cury.* Here Bulwer made his maiden speech. The occasion was a personal attack on Praed, the honorary treasurer, by a friend of both Praed and Bulwer, Robert Hildyard. Bulwer rose late in Praed's defence, speaking with fire, brevity, and point. When he sat down his was the speech of the evening; congratulations came from every quarter, and those who had never noticed him before now competed with each other for the honour of shaking his hand.

Bulwer's second speech was not delivered till the next term, November 2, 1824. The subject of debate—a comparison between the English and American constitutions

* W. G. Cookesley, the well-known Eton master, was also one of the moving spirits at the Cambridge Union in early days, and as a visitor lived to witness the debate in the society's present headquarters, secured mainly by the exertions of two later Trinity Hall men, Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. R. D. Bennett.

—was one specially suited to his recent course of private historical study. Praed and the other stars had taken the democratic side. Profiting by his Ealing tutor's Tory training, Bulwer not only advocated the British monarchical system, but by 109 votes to 37 carried the house with him. Among Bulwer's other Union speeches the most successful (1824-5) were those on the English revolution of 1688, which he defended, the necessity of Game Law Reform, which he supported, and the revolt of the Spanish colonies in 1800, which he approved. During two out of his four years at Cambridge he showed himself as ready in debate as Cockburn, as broad in his sympathies, and as sure in his facts, as C. P. Villiers, and as vivacious, but not as flippant, as Charles Buller. He learned, too, something of official business by serving successively as secretary, treasurer, and president. The chief educational value, however, of his Union experiences was, first, the knowledge he acquired of his defects as a public speaker ; secondly, the opportunity of measuring himself against the greatest of his contemporaries, not necessarily in debate, but in the social intercourse connected with it. Roughly speaking Benjamin Hall Kennedy, F. D. Maurice, Alfred Tennyson, and W. M. Thackeray were his contemporaries, all inspiring their generation at Cambridge as powerfully as they were afterwards to impress their country and their age. The example, however, that, above all others, fired Bulwer's ambition and directed his efforts, was that of the writer with whom he was, in some respects, to run a neck-and-neck race in after life. Lord Macaulay does not seem to have been continuously in residence throughout Bulwer's time ; he was, however, frequently “up” for weeks or days together, and then always in tremendous force at the Union. “I have heard,” the present writer can remember Lord Lytton saying, “O'Connell's open-air speeches, and Plunkett's almost superhuman eloquence. I never

listened to anything so transporting the hearer from himself and identifying him with the orator as Macaulay's superb utterance on the French Revolution, sustained at a higher point than at his best he afterwards touched in the House of Commons." The well-compacted knowledge, and the extraordinary memory which informed Macaulay's words, were Bulwer's admiration and despair. He shut himself up for many days of intense study, striving to obtain an equal knowledge.

To the famous *coterie*, the "Apostles," graced by the names of Alford, Hallam, and Monckton Milnes, Bulwer, in the year of its formation, 1820, had not made mark enough to belong. With some of the number Union associations made him intimate at college, others, like the Lord Houghton of after years, were among the closest of his friends throughout life. At Trinity Hall itself the undergraduate after Cockburn he knew best, and to whose literary talk he always considered himself a debtor, was the first Sir Charles Dilke, one of the 1851 exhibition originators, who, having gone there on some business of international horticulture, died suddenly at St. Petersburg, 1869. While at Cambridge, too, Bulwer first made the acquaintance of a wealthy clerical mystic who at one time occupied the conspicuous house in Park Lane afterwards belonging to the present Lord Burnham, who died at Lausanne, 1868, and who received a monograph from the pen of Charles Dickens. This was Chauncy Hare Townshend, one among the earliest enthusiasts in mesmerism, as well as in other modes of the supernatural whose attraction had even then begun to be felt by Bulwer himself.

Bulwer's chief or rather sole purely academic success, the prize poem on sculpture, was won towards the close of his Cambridge time. This season was also marked by his final speech at the Union on a subject which he had already taken up—the Game Laws. The latest oratorical effort of

his youth is noticeable for two reasons. In the first place, Bulwer's handling of the subject showed that, notwithstanding his later Conservative developments, he still retained some of the Radical or revolutionary ideas, unconsciously perhaps in early youth imparted to him by his grandfather, Warburton Lytton. Secondly, though *Alice, or the Mysteries* was not published till twelve years later, in 1837, the farewell words at the Union almost suggest a rehearsal of the political opinions expressed by the hero of that novel; Maltravers returns to England, finds his agent, while he has been abroad, has abused his authority and oppressed his tenants. He therefore takes the management of his property into his own hands, prepared, if need be, to mitigate the severity of the landlord's sporting rights.

Edward Bulwer, as has been seen, had appeared in print while yet a schoolboy, or at least a private pupil. At Cambridge he found time to write other verses than prize poems, even while most busily forming the literary capital which afterwards, as a writer, he never touched without at the same time replenishing. Bulwer, as will hereafter be seen, commenced novelist during his residence on the Cam. What amount of purely scholastic attainments did his degree represent? Mathematics he never liked, and therefore never touched. The classical tripos was created in 1824; it was barred against Bulwer by the mathematical honours required as a qualifying preliminary from candidates. Nor did he enter for any of the classical prizes that required no mathematical credentials. Macaulay disliked mathematics as much as did Bulwer, but won the Craven (University) scholarship in 1821, and became Fellow of Trinity in 1824, just before Bulwer took his degree. Two other celebrities of the Victorian Age, both belonging to a later university generation than Bulwer—the authors of *Vanity Fair* and of the *Origin of Species* respectively—resembled Bulwer in not going in for honours of any kind.

Had the subject of this volume essayed the classical tripos, he would certainly have done well. Composition in Latin and Greek, especially the latter, is the one subject that, as examinations have always proved, cannot be prepared by "cramming." Not only had that truth been mastered as a boy by Bulwer, but he had brought up with him to Cambridge a clear perception of the differences in genius and idiom between the Greek, the Latin, and the English tongues. On this subject he had, throughout his life, much that was sound and interesting to say to youths who took his fancy. Many years later, talking on these matters to John Forster, he remarked: "When one translates English into Latin, you are forming the long closely-linked period with the sense suspended until the end, you have to emphasize the logical connection by welding into one the short, independent, and seemingly co-ordinate sentences of the English. On the other hand, a more natural order and less complex construction are common alike to English and Greek; here, therefore, there need be none of the remodelling necessary to render English into Latin. Once let a teacher, by a mixed method of question and answer, make a boy understand this, and show to the learner Greek as the living language which in fact it still is, the student can then by and by intelligently grapple with the studied paradoxes of Sophoclean syntax, the squared antitheses and sage enigmas of Thucydides, free from all suspicion that these ancient Greeks were not as other men, or that too much learning must have made them mad."

CHAPTER IV

THE MAN IN HIS MAKING AND MARRING

Delmour goes to Holland House—Macaulay and Holland on Bulwer as successor to C. J. Fox—Bulwer's readings with Whewell in history, political economy, etc.—His friendship with C. H. Townshend—His religious views—On the Clapham sect—The Church of England—Roman Catholicism—Orthodox intolerance—His tour in North and West of England—Friendship with Lady Caroline Lamb—Bulwer's Byronism—His gypsy adventure—Begins foreign travel—Paris and Versailles—Friendship with Mrs. Cunningham—Gambling adventure—*Weeds and Wild Flowers*—Lady C. Lamb, Bulwer, and Byron—Bulwer's return to England—He buys a commission—Meets his future wife—The lady described—Her turn for ridicule—And satire about Bulwer and his mother.

THE schoolboy view of classical studies just mentioned was being outgrown by Bulwer when, while yet at a private tutor's, he published his first book, *Ismael, and Other Poems*, in 1820. Three years later, at Trinity Hall, he varied his historical studies and Union speeches by bringing out, through some Cambridge publishers named Carpenter, a second volume of verse, *Delmour, or a Tale of a Sylphid*. Macaulay saw these compositions in print, or heard parts of them read by the writer. At any rate, he thought well enough of, or took sufficient interest in them, to suggest a copy being sent to Holland House. This was some eighteen years before Macaulay himself, in the *Edinburgh Review* (1841), had celebrated the glories of that dwelling, but not before the fame of the place had spread itself throughout Europe. The historic Kensington mansion had become, even in Georgian days, the one instance of a great nobleman's country home surviving within earshot of the chimes of Westminster and the roar of Piccadilly. In Bulwer's earlier London days the place retained its rank as a social and intellectual centre. It was still

enlivened by the unique brilliance of Luttrell's table talk, still dominated by the imperious presence of the hostess as she commanded her company and flashed out her repartees. Lord Holland, though then approaching the end of his course, was as keenly and practically vigilant for his party as ever, and held that the only chance for the Whig existence, independently of the Radicals, was an infusion of new blood. With Macaulay's help why should not Lord Holland secure just the recruit he wanted in a young man so pre-eminent as Bulwer for the essentially Whig combination of aristocratic birth, rich connections, oratorical gifts, classical culture, and fashionable vogue? Here was something like a second Charles Fox ready-made. At any rate, *Delmour* went to Lord Holland; it secured a more than gracious acknowledgment—Holland House opened to receive a new poet.

Just then, however, the author of *Delmour* was thinking, not of social promotion, but of intellectual fame; he had, moreover, already on his hands work begun long since and now calling for completion. What were the intellectual discipline and the studies which qualified him for the authorship that, whatever from time to time his other occupations, was to be his life's unbroken work? The omniscient Whewell, afterwards the famous Master of Trinity, had been, in Bulwer's day, fellow and tutor of the college; guided by his judgment, the future author of *The Last of the Barons* had supplemented a thorough and patient historical course with systematic work at old English black-letter books. When getting up an historical subject his method throughout life was first to make an outline sketch of a period, next to consider and to make himself personally acquainted with the chief figures in the transactions of the time; he then quarried the memoirs, biographies, or whatever else might deal in detail with the epoch, and condensed abridgments of these authorities

into his commonplace book. More particularly was this his way with those of our national chroniclers who, occupied with the years between 1154 and 1483, covered the interval that separated the beginning of the Plantagenet from the end of the Yorkist era.

Apart from the researches in English history, all destined to bear substantial fruit in his best novels, nothing at Cambridge proved of more lasting value to Bulwer than his acquaintance with Whewell. Whewell it was who introduced Bulwer to Adam Smith, and, further, prescribed Sinclair on *Revenue* for supplementary study. "Sinclair," indeed, became his manual during the visit to France after taking his degree. From Whewell he had also learned to trace back political economy to its pre-scientific period in the elementary notions on the subject discerned by some expounders in Aristotle or Plato. About the teaching of philosophy he had much to say in his later years, and often deplored the practice of not beginning with English writers like Locke. Of Hegel, from an English version in his grandfather's library, Edward Bulwer had a smattering when he puzzled his mother with questions about personal identity. Before taking his degree he had been recalled to the great masters of English speculation; Whewell was then meditating his various books on the inductive sciences and on moral philosophy in England. These formed the subject of many conversations with Bulwer; to Whewell also, and his edition of Grotius on the *Rights of Peace and War*, Bulwer owed initiation into international jurisprudence. In like manner an English rendering by the same encyclopædic friend of Hermann and Dorothea first opened to Bulwer Goethe's views of the greatest movements and changes in the drama of modern history.

Some five years before Bulwer's prize poem on sculpture his friend already mentioned, Chauncy Hare Townshend, had won the chancellor's medal with his *Jerusalem*. Fre-

quently revisiting Cambridge in 1824, the older poet completely fascinated the younger. Townshend, an occasional guest of Wordsworth at Rydal, and of Southey at Keswick, was on terms approaching personal intimacy with all the best verse-writers of his time; he and Bulwer had together read and re-read their works at Cambridge. In the first instance, too, Bulwer had been attracted to Townshend not only by the personal charm of his soft manner and of his gentle nature, but by his enthusiastic experiments in clairvoyance, in spiritualism, in the other forms of mystical pastime then popular, especially mesmerism. Bulwer, indeed, was disposed to claim that before J. Y. Simpson's chloroform researches Townshend had induced Dr. Elliotson to cultivate animal magnetism, partly as a curative agency, but especially for producing insensibility during surgical operations. Elliotson also, said Bulwer-Lytton many years later, foresaw something of Lister's antiseptic treatment.

Townshend made no pretence of being a dogmatic theologian. He did not, however, at any time cease to consider himself bound by his ordination vows; he never repudiated the central principles of revealed religion; he believed it to be the best guide in the perplexities and difficulties of daily life; he had himself found in it the one antidote to the spiritual and mental depression which periodically troubled his own too sensitive being. Townshend was therefore, by conviction not less than by temperament, well fitted to console and advise Bulwer during the prolonged season of melancholy prostration which overtook him in his freshman's term at Cambridge, and from which he roused himself only when his friend Cockburn had induced him to join the Cambridge Union, and so to begin the exertions and triumphs that braced alike his body and mind, as well as portended and prepared him for oratorical successes before another audience after he had

already achieved literary fame. Even thus, however, Bulwer's trials of soul continued in some form or another throughout his Cambridge course ; indeed, long after that was finished. Christianity still delayed real solace and, in his own words, "oppressed him with its awe rather than soothed him with its mercy." His faith had still to acquire the robustness which enabled him to appropriate its promises in addition to believing its sanctions.

Edward Bulwer's home training had received from his exemplary mother a distinctively religious bias. His spiritual maturity coincided with a time of peace, or rather slumber, in the English Church. Wesleyan evangelicalism had begun to lose its unction ; as yet there were few signs of the Anglican revival that, following it, was to influence or, at least, to interest some of Bulwer's contemporaries so distinguished as Disraeli. The philosophy and theology officially taught at Cambridge in Bulwer's day were those of Paley, whose *Christian Evidences* were supplemented by a complete scheme of Utilitarian morals. Voltairianism retained some of its vogue, but its sceptical agencies operated less to the injury of Christianity in particular than to the general undermining of all accepted creeds or traditions, civil as well as ecclesiastical. In politics a Radical, sympathizing with the French Revolution leaders, Warburton Lytton held in religion opinions decidedly evangelical, and these he missed no opportunity of imparting to his grandchild. It was an age in which men who took life seriously held the whole scheme of Church and State to be in need not merely of new inspirations, but of something almost amounting to reconstruction. Bible Christianity was but another word for evangelicalism. That form of faith, indeed, then promised to the most earnest intellects of the time—to Mackintosh, Wilberforce, and Stephen—the best hope of a spiritual regeneration. However broad his religious views and strong his instinctive dislike of sacer-

dotal dogma, Edward Bulwer, while in residence on the Cam, was, and throughout life remained, a convinced Christian, a true Church of England man, holding a non-Puritanical evangelicalism to be the faith that best suited the English temper and life.

The Tractarian movement, it has been seen, set in after Bulwer's first youth was over. John Wesley had not a little of Bulwer's own mysticism and belief in the supernatural. That doubtless helps to explain Bulwer's interest in Wesley's opinions, speculations, and especially in his *Diary*. After the Methodists came the Claphamites. Of these the chief lights—Zachary Macaulay (the historian's father), William Wilberforce, and Sir James Stephen—were also slavery abolitionists. That was of itself enough to predispose an enthusiastic and liberty-loving nature like Bulwer's in favour also of their religious tenets. Yet it was these same men whose severity in other matters proved instrumental in bringing about Bulwer's relapse into religious indifference. The Clapham Puritans gloried in their enmity to many forms of art. Stephen denounced as the "vestibule of hell" the theatre at the time of its being adorned by the genius of the Keans, of the Kembles, of Miss O'Neill. Bulwer did not begin to write for the stage till 1838; he became, however, a novelist while still an undergraduate, and to those who, like the select Clapham public, allowed no fiction less sober than Hannah More's *Florio and Cælebs*, or Mrs. Sherwood's *Fairchild Family*, the novel in the hands of Bulwer's masters, Fielding and Theodore Hook, seemed not less of an abomination than the stage. Bulwer was always a literary artist first, and afterwards, on general grounds, a believer in the Established Church, as at once the best bulwark against a tyranny of priests on the one hand, and religious anarchy on the other. His own spirit-searching experiences at Cambridge or elsewhere left an indelible mark on his mind, and, as

will be seen hereafter, reflected themselves in his writings. In these he was too much occupied with defining and illustrating a philosophy of life at length to dwell upon the spiritual aspects and the moral results of the faith that is stronger than death. In very early days, before they were published in *In Memoriam*, Tennyson had repeated to him his own lines :—

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Never, in the conventional and sinister sense, a free-thinker, he had long spells of agnosticism, due, perhaps, more to physical or nervous than to intellectual causes. Truth in religion he held to be the monopoly of no sect or even church. Without committing himself to all its pretensions or articles, he believed in the English Church, as he did in the English Constitution. Jeremy Taylor, Robert South, and, much less carefully, Lancelot Andrewes, as well as other seventeenth-century divines, were read by him not, in the first place, for their divinity, but for the same reason that made him give nights and days to the study and the annotating of the matter and the manner of the Norwich knight (so called by Bulwer himself) who wrote the *Religio Medici*. These seventeenth or early eighteenth-century masters of prose marked epochs in English style and thought; they were consulted by Bulwer, not for any message they might have brought from on high, but for their varied skill in, and influence upon, the art of literary expression. The one piece of theological reading done by him belongs to a much later period; its subject was the free-will and predestinarian controversy. The volume taken by him for a textbook was J. B. Mozley's work, bringing together all the hair-splittings and logomachies of which it had been the occasion from St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas to Archbishop Lawrence. In all spiritual matters an amateur, or, at the

most, an enquirer and observer, in reality he was never nearer becoming a convert to evangelicalism than of yielding to the allurements of Rome. His first continental trip was made at the most impressionable age—immediately after leaving Cambridge. His mental and spiritual state was then one of restless and painful ferment—just that for which the religion and ritual of Rome might have had an irresistible attraction; he rejected many adroit overtures of polished priests who were his private friends. At the same time he recognized the exact suitability of the Roman Church to the southern nations of Europe. Personal experience also caused him to acknowledge that the Roman communion, in modern times not less than in the Middle Ages, produced among its votaries the saintliest characters and the most zealous agents of moral and social reform.

Other considerations prevented the Low Church surroundings of his boyhood from securing his mature allegiance to the Clapham creed. His political development involved many changes of opinion. Amongst them he remained firmly and honestly attached to the cardinal principles of justice, forbearance, and liberty. These seemed to him and to others conspicuously violated in the trials of Hone and Carlile for blasphemy. In each case the punishment inflicted involved the entire ruin of the defendants. Stephen's onslaughts on the drama have been mentioned as originating Bulwer's reaction against the religionists with whom in his youth he had most to do. The instincts and prejudices of British citizenship now operated in the same direction. His break with the Puritanical forms of modern piety was completed by the diverse reading that, pursued by him after he had taken his degree, helped to form his literary style and at the same time to deepen his detestation of bigotry, religious or political. The crisp, antithetical period and the sententious epigram

into which Bulwer, like Disraeli, was now condensing his reflections on human nature, and his observations of life, were copied by both from the French encyclopædists. Bulwer, in particular, might at this time have been called not only the pupil, but the product of Diderot and Helvetius.

Authorship began in earnest with him during the foreign travels on which he set out after his college course was done. Some time before then the acquaintances he had made at the Cambridge Union brought him many invitations to country houses, for the most part in the northern parts of the kingdom. Among the earliest of the visits thus paid had been one to the Ords of Northumberland, an old territorial Whig family whose influence was felt throughout the southern portion of the county, which generally returned at least one Ord to Parliament. Political supporters and social intimates of Charles James Fox, the Ords had been figures in the fashionable circles of his time. These traditions they still maintained, gathering beneath their Northumbrian roof all that was most bright and modish as well as intellectual in the society of the day. To a young man of Bulwer's tastes such a house was a kind of social finishing school for studying life and character; some ideas he then picked up were afterwards used (1846) in the sketch of Sir Miles St. John's Laughton Manor in *Lucretia*.

It was after a fortnight passed at the Ords' that, while ostensibly only a tourist to the Lakes, he performed something like a religious pilgrimage. From *Eugene Aram* to the *Caxtons*, *My Novel*, and *Kenelm Chillingly*, the stage properties of his heroes often comprise a fishing-rod and knapsack. For Bulwer himself on the present occasion the last sufficed. Strapping it on his back, he made his way to Ullswater, in Westmoreland. That district contained the grave of his old Ealing love, Lucy D——. Discovering it after some search, Bulwer passed a night beside it in prayer.

At dawn he felt himself a new man. He was as "one re-baptized, if not re-born." All that he esteemed best in his spiritual or intellectual life, as in his work, was dated by him from the vows and inspiration of those dark and lonely hours in a Cumbrian churchyard. The seven years' interval between his romance of boyish passion at Wallington's (1819) and his marriage in 1826 was marked by the outbreak of no serious or sustained attachment, though by several fugitively Platonic associations with fashionable ladies a good deal older than himself. Of these the first was with Lady Caroline Lamb.

The Byronic memories still clinging to her name explain his earliest attraction to this fascinating and eccentric being. She was eighteen years older than Bulwer, whose portrait as a child she had painted. Knebworth lay within a drive or walk of Bocket, where Lady Caroline lived. She had seen some childish verses by the precocious Knebworth child, commemorating an act of kindness to a working man injured in a crowd. At her request Mrs. Bulwer brought her son to Bocket. A slight, rounded figure and a childlike way of wearing the pale golden hair in close curls made the mistress of Bocket look many years younger than her real age (she had recently caricatured Byron in her romance *Glenarvon*). She must have been in Bulwer's boyhood not much less than forty; she looked at least ten years younger. Edward Bulwer forgot her years in the freshness of her manner and in the interest of all she had to say about the poet after whom he was fashioning himself. Unconsciously he began to imitate the artificial drawl with which Lady Caroline, like other fine ladies of the "Devonshire House" set, habitually talked.

While Bulwer had been reading for Cambridge with Thomson at Ramsgate, Lady Caroline Lamb occasionally visited the then fashionable Broadstairs, whose assembly

rooms vied in distinction with Almack's ; here she pointed out to him the celebrities of the hour ; these included people with reputations of every kind and with none at all from east, west, north, and south ; for in Bulwer-Lytton's first youth the Isle of Thanet as a centre of cosmopolitan fashion ran a dead heat with that section of the Sussex shore looked down upon by George IV's Pavilion. " You see," Lady Caroline Lamb would say to her young friend, " yonder man, in what they speak of as ' court evening undress,' with the red hair that has made us call him ' Carrots,'—at such pains to show grace, dignity, and spirit in his dancing steps ? That is Lord Yarmouth, and there, of course, ready to black his boots, is his *âme damnée*, John Wilson Croker." It was the first occasion on which the future author of *Pelham* saw together the peer who sat to Thackeray for Lord Steyne and to Disraeli for Lord Monmouth, and Monmouth's factotum, the Rigby of *Coningsby*. In the Broadstairs rooms, too, Edward Bulwer saw a short, stout man, with a red face, black hair, and blacker eyes, tripping about like an undergraduate on a holiday. This was the famous editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Francis Jeffrey, then about to open the literary division of British-American marriages by finding a wife in John Wilkes's grandniece, Miss Charlotte Wilkes, of New York. Lady Caroline maintained through the post a sort of philosophic and literary flirtation with Bulwer while he was at Cambridge. The correspondence even continued during a portion of the absence abroad that followed the provincial adventures in his native land. The lady repeatedly protested that she regarded him only with maternal feelings—welcomed him as a friend, but would frown upon him as a lover. Lady Caroline was so entirely the slave of the moment's impulse and caprice as not consciously to belie these declarations by the transports of affection with which she welcomed his visits and the tearful fondness

with which she chid him for his absence or for any lack of demonstrativeness in his attentions.

In taking Byron for his model, Bulwér followed not only the particular bent of his own taste, but the fashion of the time. He could not, therefore, but hang with delight on the lips of one who had lived so close to Byron himself and whose chief pleasure was to talk about him. The scene of these conversations did not restrict itself to Brocket or Knebworth or even London; Lady Caroline, it has been seen, haunted the seaside region where her young admirer ought to have been studying algebra and Euclid; when he went on with his mother to Brighton, she generally exchanged the Kentish for the Sussex coast. Not that his attendance on the mature siren was a time of idleness. On the contrary, in the midst of it he managed to write many chapters of probably his first effort at autobiographical romance, *Rupert de Lindsay*. This story never went beyond the manuscript stage; in different parts of it are depicted most of the well-known persons he had so far met. The foreground, of course, displays the enchantress of Brocket, thinly disguised as Lady Clara; while her husband, Sir Henry Melton, "of rare intellectual powers and attainments combined with joyousness of disposition, a thoroughly large, frank nature, careless in the nobility of its character and noble in the carelessness of its expression," was Lord Melbourne, at full length and from life. There, too, were Bulwer's early teachers, not only, of course, Wallington of Ealing, but Dr. Hooker of Rottingdean as Dr. Wortham of Puzzledean, and even Dr. Keate of Eton, in whose presence he had once been for about ten minutes, masquerading as Mr. Tuftoe. Equally crowded with a chaos of juvenile memories was another manuscript belonging to this period, the tale *Lionel Hastings*.

The English wanderings between 1821 and 1824 previous to his foreign travels were also occupied with re-

hearsing the literary effects in some compositions which, unlike those just mentioned, afterwards appeared in print. The *Disowned*, belonging to the group of early novels, was not published till 1829. Five years, at least, before then were gathered the gypsy experiences with which the *Disowned* opens. Just before or after taking his degree, Edward Bulwer, on his southward journey from the Lakes, was collecting local details and colour about *Eugene Aram* in Yorkshire, and happened to find himself at Scarborough. His long hair and some peculiarities of manner or speech caused him to be mistaken for a foreigner. He had run out of ready money when a chance meeting with his brother Henry, travelling in his usual state, gave him all supplies he wanted, and started him on his way to London. "Shall I tell you your fortune, my pretty young gentleman?" was the question rousing Edward Bulwer from a reverie in the course of his progress through southern Yorkshire or the Midlands. The good looks of the zingari girl who had come up to him of course brought her the answer, "Yes." Having crossed her palm with silver, he heard that he had in infancy lost his father, that he had brothers, but no sister, and that as a boy he had a sweetheart whose loss nearly killed him and made it impossible for him ever to be gay again.

What an opportunity, it struck him, for learning astrology, chiromancy, and other modes of occultism which he afterwards mastered by himself, and which, he lets it be seen in the *Disowned*, he had generally found a sealed book to the gypsies themselves. Now, however, introduced by the gypsy girl, he stayed at her encampment for a week, drinking out of the romany cup and feeding on the romany fare. Naturally, the original fortune-teller fell in love with the stranger, who then was one of the handsomest young men in England. "If you love me," she pressed, "marry me; not," she at once added, "that I

mean, as you mean, married according to your fashion, but in grandmother's presence by breaking a tile with me into two halves, and only binding ourselves for five years." "Alas!" summing up the whole incident exclaimed Bulwer, "I went further for a wife, and fared worse."

The little sentimental diversion in the gypsy camp reaching Lady Caroline Lamb's ears, brought Bulwer a gentle but passionate chiding from her; it did not interrupt the curious and blameless friendship between the mature woman and the youth whom, having lost Byron, she amused herself with dressing in Byron's mantle. Fresh from the gypsies, Bulwer stayed at Brighton with a friend, Frederick Villiers, to whom he will presently be found rendering some service abroad. For the present the Brighton trip with Villiers was followed by the winding-up of his Cambridge days. Of Lady Caroline Lamb in real life Bulwer was still to see something. Here, however, in passing, it may be said that she reappears as Lady Bellen-den in another Bulwerian story, *Greville*, destined, like so much more written during this period, not to reach the printer's hands. Bulwer always reckoned himself to have begun life young—at seventeen, with his Ealing adventure in 1820. The second term in the school of the world opened with his first journey abroad in 1825; on this tour he started by crossing the Channel from Folkestone to Boulogne. "Adventures are to the adventurous," might have been Bulwer's as well as Disraeli's motto. Before leaving England he had roughly drafted the duel scene in *Pelham*; he had scarcely touched French soil when he seemed to be turning reality into romance by taking a second's part in a duel himself. The threatened encounter of real life differed from that of the fiction in that the allotted weapons were pistols and not swords. A boarding-house quarrel between his Cambridge friend Frederick Villiers and a choleric old soldier, General Wemyss, was to be settled by

a hostile meeting on the sands. Bulwer had arrived just in time to be engaged as Villiers' second. After the exchange of two shots the seconds declared honour to have been satisfied; the principals returned with them none the worse for the encounter. At college the placid and amiable Villiers had been found by Bulwer an agreeable alternative to the impetuous and fiery Cockburn. Abroad afterwards he proved a less congenial companion; the two young men, each going his own way, separated at Paris.

Here Edward Bulwer found his brother Henry, who, after leaving Cambridge without taking a degree, had been in the Guards, tasting all the gaieties of a fashionable man about town. Now, however, the energy and ambition of the Bulwer-Lytton nature were declaring themselves; having decided upon diplomacy for a career, he intended to lose no time in becoming an ambassador. The brothers were too much preoccupied with their own different interests and pursuits to see much of each other in Paris. Once established in the French capital, Edward Bulwer indulged in all the pleasures and acquired most of the varied experiences to which he introduces Pelham in the novel of that name he was now preparing. Like another of his own characters—Devereux—he made the acquaintance of an Irish Jesuit settled in France; this was the Abbé Kinsela, an amiable edition of *Devereux's* Abbé Montreuil. Kinsela's good offices and his own family connections opened to Edward Bulwer the best houses of the Faubourg St. Germain. Among these families was one with whom Kinsela desired to unite Bulwer by a closer than a merely social tie. Madame de la Rochejacquelein's circle included many desirable daughters of the old French *noblesse*, but none more sought after than a certain young lady richly dowered, partly educated in England, with a predisposition in favour of the civilization and culture amid which she had passed some of her earlier days. The

fair scion of royal and aristocratic France had no objection to a husband not of her own Church, and might, Kinsela told Bulwer, become his wife for the asking. The English subject of the Abbé's matrimonial diplomacy still nursed the heart wound he had received at Ealing; his thoughts were also just then preoccupied not only with reading, but with the preparation of some fresh poems, *Weeds and Wild Flowers*. Having now satiated himself with Paris, he took a country lodging at Versailles.

Here, as elsewhere, and at most times, Bulwer led two lives. The Paris apartment, still retained, kept him, when inclined, in touch with the excitements and revelries of the brightest city in Europe. This dual existence was itself a fulfilment of the views formed a few years earlier by the shrewdest among his boyhood's teachers, Hooker of Rottingdean. Hooker had foreseen in his pupil's exuberant vitality at once the seed of noble performances and perilous possibilities. "Without," he said, "some motive for the extraordinary exertion not more than the self-denial which it is in him to practise, his eagerness for pleasure and his high spirits may prove his ruin." Such a consummation was averted by the intellectual ambitions that were part of his nature, by the caution which grew with his years, and by the worldly wisdom and self-control that kept him from carrying the errors and excesses of youth to a fatal point. On the other hand, his temptations to extravagance and indiscretions of every kind remained greater probably than those besetting any of his associates at school, at college, or in after life. But he had the power of turning the allurements of folly into experience, and both into "copy" for the printers. His fashionable or fast life in Paris under the restored monarchy yielded him the materials he wanted for *Pelham* first and for *Ernest Maltravers* afterwards. Of the two characters, Pelham and Maltravers, take the chief ingredients, blend them well together; the

mixture will be Edward Bulwer himself. In both these books the round of pleasures and excitements described is that which, in exactly the same order and with associates of the same kind, had previously been gone through by Edward Bulwer.* Touches of self-portraiture and record abound in *Pelham*, who, though a dandy, is never a fribble, but always a remarkably shrewd and intellectual man of the world. Pelham is an only son; Ernest Maltravers, a younger, with a turn for moralizing and philosophy, is Bulwer to the life. Whether in society or in solitude, his first visit to Paris in 1825 allowed brain and nerve no intervals of rest. Even in his Versailles lodging the mechanical part of an author's calling, the drudgery of note-taking, collecting and arranging materials, was pushed on at fever heat. The eager enjoyment of Paris dissipation alternated with fierce bouts of industry at Versailles. Both, as he himself fancied, may be explained by the heart wounds, as yet cicatrized but not healed, which he had brought with him from Ealing. The acquaintance with Lady Caroline Lamb, like the harmless flirtation with the pretty gypsy, increased his knowledge of life and character, but did not permanently engage his affections, still less discipline or soothe his spirit. In *Ernest Maltravers* the hero's association with Madame Valerie de Ventadour ripened, after a fashion entirely unforeseen by himself, into a friendship creditable to both. Beyond the fact of the scene in both cases being Paris, there is nothing in common between the episode in the novel and the acquaintance which the novelist was fortunate enough to make, at the date now reached, with one of his own countrywomen, who long remained his good genius. About this lady something must now be said.

Among the earliest English settlers in Paris after Waterloo was a family named Cunningham. The lady of the

* See especially *Pelham*, Chaps. X. to XXXIII.

house was the daughter of a Cornish baronet who had shown much hospitality to the Bourbon princes during their English exile. In 1825 Mrs. Cunningham was a leader of Anglo-French society, then the most variously attractive in Europe. Beneath her roof Bulwer met the greatest and most exclusive of Gallic entertainers, such as the Duchesse Descazes and the Vicomte d'Arincourt. To some such exalted host Bulwer went after dining at the *Rocher de Cancale*, before looking in at a less patrician abode, a *demi-monde* princess, or a gambling-house. In the words used by him of his own personages, the author who was also largely the original of Pelham and Maltravers drank to the lees every cup of enjoyment presented to him by "the most enchanting metropolis in the world." Mrs. Cunningham, in addition to being a great lady and a poetess of no mean merit, was a kindly and sensible as well as a very accomplished woman. For weeks, if not for months together, after spells of Paris dissipation, Bulwer, in his Versailles retirement, gained at once repose of spirit and fresh supplies of knowledge by varying his meditations on the map of Europe or Rousseau's *Julie* with the study of Mill's *Political Economy*. All this time Mrs. Cunningham was writing him letters full of the wisest counsel; "that you may be both happy and successful," was her epistolary refrain, "overcome the self-consciousness and the readiness to take offence which I know from yourself you consider your principal defects."

In addition to this lady's uniformly improving influence, Bulwer learned from his Parisian course at least one practical lesson which afterwards kept him out of many scrapes. Mrs. Cunningham had amiably rebuked the egotism that through life was part of his character. Had he not, however, been a close student of his own physiognomy, the warning now mentioned might have been missed. Returning from a night's heavy play in the Palais

Royal to his own rooms, he was putting away his gains, which had been large, when he caught sight of his own face reflected in the glass ; it had, he thought, the hard and scheming, as well as haggard, look of the professional gambler. Not that, either in youth or maturity, he need have shrunk from playing high. As a lad, with a small patrimony and dependent on his mother, he enjoyed a command of money practically as unlimited as his own Pelham. He possessed a natural aptitude for all games of chance or skill. The nocturnal scrutiny of his own countenance at Paris had, however, so shocked him that he always afterwards refused to indulge a fondness for cards that amounted to a passion. If he had ever begun a betting-book that, too, was closed at the same time. A clever, sympathetic, and morally irreproachable woman of the world, like Mrs. Cunningham, abounding in practical good sense, disciplined by varied experience of life, was the most useful friend for Bulwer at this turning-point of his life. He was still suffering from the attack of Byronism which had begun in his boyish meetings with Lucy D——. His vanity showed itself in the constant parade of his blighted existence, in the peculiarities of dress, and in the care given to the long curling hair of which he was proud.

On some of these weaknesses Mrs. Cunningham seriously and successfully expostulated ; out of others she amiably tried to laugh him. As for the disappointment of heart at the age of seventeen, Mrs. Cunningham refused to believe the reality of the experiences he recalled, or of the agonizing impressions he protested they had left. It was all a dream of the fancy. There never had been any one who exactly corresponded with his imaginary portrait of the young lady. She was dead and buried. If her marriage and any unhappiness that followed it had hastened her end, the fault lay, not with him, but with her family. Time and Mrs. Cunningham's good influences gradually roused

Bulwer from his Byronic reveries. His musings on the irrevocable past yielded to a healthy resolution of turning to the best account an available present. History, economics, *belles-lettres*, philosophy, and fiction by writers of all countries and of all ages were read as diligently and systematically as if he had been a candidate preparing for a Civil Service competition. He planned and prepared a series of essays afterwards capitally executed. He made a fair copy of some verses written at odd moments during and since his Cambridge time, under the title of *Weeds and Wild Flowers*. They were privately printed in the first year of his residence at Paris. This little volume contained about a hundred pages of rhyme, interspersed with the shortest and slightest prose paragraphs. The frontispiece represented a ship sailing between rocks and ruins, with the accompanying motto: "*Per scopulos tendimus ubi?*" It was inscribed to the author's old Trinity Hall friend, Sir Alexander Cockburn, who, when Lord Chief Justice in the eighties, was good enough to show me the only copy I have ever seen. "Bulwer," he commented, "when sending it me, apologetically drew my attention to a mistake in the motto I should never have found out—the use of an adverb signifying 'rest' instead of that meaning 'motion'—*quo*." It may be a biographical duty not to ignore this booklet; it would be an injustice to rescue much of its contents from the oblivion they have long since secured. The best thing it contains is an exceedingly slight satiric sketch in irregular metres of Almack's, started in 1765, but not fully attaining its fashionable vogue before Bulwer became a young man about town.

Among the hostesses of 1825 was the then famous "Lydia White." Her "Wednesday nights" were frequented by the notabilities of the period, literary or political; they held something like a middle place between Holland House on the one hand and Lady Blessington's somewhat later

parties at Kensington Gore on the other. The "darkest blues" and "lightest bards" forming Lydia White's guests were all passed in review on their way to Almack's, "at about three-quarters past eleven." Lady Cowper, Lady Ellenborough, Lady Belfast, Lady Grantham, Lady Exeter, Lady Gwydir, Lady Uxbridge, Lady Jersey, that one of the beautiful Miss Sheridans who afterwards became Mrs. Norton, Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, the Princess de Lieben, the cosmopolitan confidante, and statesmen and diplomatists who were then making history—these are all touched, though with a hand that had yet to learn the skill afterwards to be shown in *The New Timon* and *St. Stephens*.

The satirical handling of Rogers was afterwards regretted by Bulwer. "Rogers," he said to Forster, "was a sound literary judge, and did me several good turns." An autobiographical note is struck in the lines about Lady Caroline Lamb. She is hit off with equal amiability and discernment; the key to her character is contained in the couplet:

All thy woes have sprung from feeling,
Thine only guilt was not concealing.

And so on, and so on. The little tribute in *Weeds and Wild Flowers* was paid when the poet was twenty-two and the lady forty. Not worth quoting at length, it still has some historical interest, because its tone and language conclusively show that Edward Bulwer's experience had taught him that, as Rogers also declared, Lady Caroline's momentary passions were as innocent as they were also fevered and fickle. "Read," she writes in her acknowledgment of the verses, "the last *Edinburgh* about Lord Byron; for, like me, you are too fond of him; turn from the modern school, stick to the old one."

Byron rightly has been called an elemental force of the nineteenth century; no more than Disraeli himself could Bulwer escape from the Byronism which impregnated the

whole intellectual atmosphere of his time. Bulwer's constant change of scene and rapidity of movement from place to place were imitated from Byron, and vindicated in Byron's own words, "it produced a quicker flow of thought, a fresher run of fancy." To observe, therefore, chronological continuity in following the successive stages of Edward Bulwer's personal and literary progress the unities of place must be sacrificed. In the spring of 1825 their variation by fits of study at Versailles did not prevent the gaieties of Paris beginning to pall on him. Hence the earliest notion recurred to during his second stay in Paris of following Byron's footsteps in Switzerland, or perhaps penetrating to St. Petersburg. The Russian trip was no doubt suggested by his novel *Deveraux*. That work was not published till two or three years after the date now reached. Before then a good deal—including a second absence abroad—had happened. Much fresh reading and writing had been done; but the Russian visit was never made. His birthday was May 25th; shortly before the twenty-second of those anniversaries he revisited his native land.

There had come over him weariness of things in general, with an acute indisposition to pen and ink in particular. Some of his most famous ancestors on both sides had been men of action, soldiers like his father, or statesmen like the remote maternal relative who had moved prominently in the seventeenth-century negotiations between the Stuart kings and Parliament. After the manner of Byron, his senior only by fifteen years, Bulwer had drunk in during his youth the sound of battle between great nations; his ears had been deafened by the crash of Napoleon's fall; he had watched the stirring incidents that preceded or accompanied the resettlement of the world after Waterloo. His energies had lost none of their force since they startled and impressed his excellent schoolmaster of Rottingdean. Moreover, he had always liked the social pomp and circum-

stance of war, nor did he put the finishing touch to his own *Paul Clifford* before investing him with the title of an officer in "the Rifles." Soon after returning to England Bulwer decided on a military career. During the summer of 1826 he actually bought an unattached ensign commission. This he did not sell till 1829; for three years, therefore, he was nominally an officer in the British Army.

More fruitful, however, in consequences than the digression into soldiership was the sequel of the welcome given him, on his first reaching London, by his mother. Moved by pride and affection that lady begged her just-returned son to let her take him to a tea-party at Miss Berry's; she had long been engaged to it; at the eleventh hour she could not possibly put it off. Tired with his journey and in no humour for the "small and early" to which his mother had committed herself, he nevertheless accompanied her; he was rewarded by finding himself the lion of the evening and by meeting many originals of Mrs. Bungay's guests—"Miss Bunion" ("L. E. L.") included—at the dinner-party described by Thackeray in *Pendennis*. The family resemblance between Mrs. Bulwer and her son now struck every one. Both had the characteristic Lytton nose and lips, quickness of glance, and restlessness of manner. Presently a fresh arrival caused Mrs. Bulwer to say: "Edward, what a singularly beautiful face!" The young lady thus described was accompanied by a gentleman who proved to be an uncle, Sir John Doyle, with whom she had formerly lived at his official residence, Government House, Guernsey; she was now staying beneath his roof in London. Her fine, strong physiognomy—distinctly of the Irish type—like the fascination of her presence and manner, were inherited from the Irish ancestors; their matrimonial arrangements had not been more uniformly happy than those of the Lyttons themselves. Her father, Francis Massy Wheeler, of Lizzard

Connel, Co. Limerick, had, at the age of seventeen, made a marriage followed by the same sort of sequel as that which severed the union of Edward Bulwer's grandfather, Richard Warburton Lytton, with Elizabeth Barbara Jodrell. Before Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler agreed to live apart there had been born to them two daughters ; of these Rosina, the younger, continued chiefly in her mother's charge. Mrs. Wheeler, however, prided herself on her *salon* ; she was much preoccupied in filling it with socialists and free-thinkers. Her elder daughter had died. Her polite engagements left her little time for giving her younger daughter a due share of maternal training, tenderness, and care. Rosina Wheeler's situation, therefore, when Edward Bulwer first met her must have been almost as solitary as that which, some ten years earlier, had deepened his interest in his Ealing sweetheart. Between the two young ladies there was, however, this great difference. The Ealing apparition of Bulwer's boyhood had known nothing of existence outside the walls of her own suburban home. At the date of Miss Berry's tea-party Rosina Wheeler was quite a woman of the world already. An authoress while yet a schoolgirl, she had been petted for her good looks and pretty verses by persons of fashion like Lady Caroline Lamb, who had coquetted with Edward Bulwer and predicted literary fame for Rosina herself. At this time, Edward Bulwer's chief claim to celebrity was his oratory at the Cambridge Union and his prize poem on sculpture.

Miss Wheeler's Irish sense of humour and quick eye for the ridiculous were combined with an unrestrained turn for mimicry that was the admiration of her enemies and the terror of her friends. Before the close of the evening now looked back upon, this dangerous gift found plenty of material for its exercise. She amused Miss Spence and other charitable visitors by making fun of Mrs. Bulwer's

turban, suggesting a pile of Covent Garden strawberry baskets, and comparing her movements among the company to those of a galvanized rag-bag. The satirized lady's son came off a great deal better. To begin with, his features were the softened duplicates of his mother's ; rather too much of the dandy may have shown itself in his glitteringly golden hair that, worn in ringlets, played about his shoulders, as in the air and dress of the young man himself. Still, in spite of these extravagances, his face and bearing were not only gentleman-like, but patrician. This was the sort of thing to which, Miss Wheeler reminds one, she had always been accustomed and of which she considered herself a good judge. She had, however, to struggle against a feeling of nausea, not only at the fulsomeness of his compliments and flattery, but at the foppery of his dress ; for, gleaming with French polish, his boots reflected the company like a looking-glass ; while his transparent shirt-front was an arrangement in embroidery and lace never till then seen in a Mayfair drawing-room. Elaborate wristbands were not fully popularized by d'Orsay till ten years later ; they were anticipated now by Mr. Edward Lytton-Bulwer, as, since his father's death,* he had been called. Evidently it was Miss Wheeler's duty to administer one of her famous snubs to the young gentleman who was so transparently and aggressively in love with himself. She found her opportunity first in severely ignoring his Cambridge poem, secondly in the variations of his family nomenclature, of which she at once began to make fun. Nevertheless, before they separated at Miss Berry's, Miss Wheeler had accepted an invitation from Mrs. Bulwer for an early evening at her own house in Seymour Street. There and then Edward Bulwer practically declared him-

* Her father's death had left Mrs. Bulwer his sole heiress. Resuming her maiden after her married name, she became Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, and her son Mr. Lytton-Bulwer.

self as her lover, and the conversation turned upon other things—on the Paris booklet, *Weeds and Wild Flowers*. Of this Lady Caroline Lamb had shown Miss Wheeler a copy, and it formed the earliest subject of a regular correspondence between the author and Miss Wheeler after the Berry evening. This is the point at which to begin tracing the progress of that acquaintance through the stages of love and courtship till it reached the goal of marriage. With marriage the husband's working life as a professional man of letters commenced.

CHAPTER V

PREPARATIONS FOR A TWO-FOLD CAREER MATURED

Bulwer's dependence on his mother—Why she disapproved idea of her son's proposed marriage—Bulwer as dutiful son—His West-of-England tour—His second stay abroad—Mrs. Cunningham's advice—"Childe Harold's" reply—Parliamentary disappointment—Edward Bulwer's and Miss Wheeler's respective values in the marriage market of their day—Mrs. Bulwer's tactless interference—Bulwer's Byronism—Miss Wheeler's inspiration—*O'Neil*—Afterwards dramatized—A quotation—Poetic-oratoric parallels—*Glenallan*—Prospect of authorship as a profession—Bulwer and the two Disraelis—Bulwer's opinion of 'sport'—Philosophical studies—Bulwer's possible defence of Cicero against Mommsen—Metaphysics, natural science—History of English Literature planned by him (*Quarterly Essays*), Saxon, Renaissance, Commonwealth and Restoration English prose—Addison, Steele, etc.—Retrogression—Want of raciness and idiomatic style in literary English—The "Cockney school"—The term as used by Bulwer not necessarily one of mere reproach—His attitude to contemporary writers more favourable than Byron's—Bulwer's preparations for a parliamentary career in conjunction with those for a literary—His final return to England, 1826.

"THE attentions of a young gentleman whose mother, a widow lady, objects to his marrying me." So, in a letter to a friend of her own sex, did Rosina Wheeler speak of her relations with Edward Lytton-Bulwer in 1825. The fond mother may have been slow to foresee, but on their earliest manifestation was quick to notice, the results to her son of the evening at Miss Berry's. These all came of his dutiful compliance with her own request that he should show himself with her at that literary tea-table. Each fresh sign of advance and reciprocity in this most ineligible attachment seemed the more hateful because Mrs. Bulwer felt she could reproach herself alone for its beginnings. The two young people met often enough in London, but more frequently in the country, and that almost under Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's eyes. Her son kept one of

his saddle-horses at his mother's country house, Knebworth ; there his almost weekly visits gave him the opportunity of riding to Brocket, as has been already said, only a few miles distant, on the pretext now of obtaining fresh information on matters Byronic from Lady Caroline Lamb, and now of asking her good word with Murray about a poem he thought of publishing. Whether that last request was complied with or not, the present Mr. John Murray's obliging courtesy enables me to state that the Albemarle house did not issue anything—except, of course, his *Quarterly Review* articles—for the first Lord Lytton until 1866, when his *Lost Tales of Miletus* was published by Mr. Murray. Lady Caroline Lamb has been already mentioned as one of Miss Wheeler's friends. When the Lytton-Bulwer of 1825 stayed, as he did for weeks together, at Brocket, the chief attraction was Miss Wheeler herself, then Lady Caroline's most frequent guest. More than once he went to Brocket without going to Knebworth at all. The way to Brocket round by Knebworth had, he tells his mother with pious regret, proved too long for his horse.

Mrs. Bulwer's other sons were handsomely provided for ; the eldest, William, had, of course, the Bulwer property in Norfolk ; the diplomatist, Henry, had been endowed with an independent fortune of his own by his paternal grandmother ; the youngest, Edward's, patrimony, amounting only to two hundred a year, left him practically dependent upon his mother for a yearly expenditure during and since his Cambridge days, averaging at least as many thousands as of his own he actually had hundreds. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, it must be remembered, had always seen more of her youngest and favourite son than of his brothers ; his temperament and tastes were, like the features of his face, the same as her own. From her he inherited the literary gifts which her personal influence had helped to

direct and mould. She had, therefore, every motive and justification for using her influence and even authority to dissuade the boy so dear to her from a marriage forbidden, as she might well think, by family omens on both sides. The happiest, proudest, and most useful days of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton herself had been passed by her, not as a wife, but as a widow. The separation between her own parents had darkened her entire girlhood. Her father Warburton Lytton's will in 1810 made her, as his heiress, the owner of Knebworth. Her whole being, however, seems to have been embittered by the exile from the state of a fine country seat to the dullness of a small London house. On the other hand, the ill-assorted union of her father and mother had deprived, in her early girlhood, Rosina Wheeler of any home at all; when Edward Bulwer first met her she was practically an orphan. Such solitude and defencelessness undoubtedly served not only to deepen, but to elevate and spiritualize the passion which the Irish beauty had inspired. Nevertheless from the first Edward Bulwer solemnly promised his mother that, without her consent, he would not become Miss Wheeler's declared lover, much less her husband. By way of giving effect to that assurance, he proceeded to make hurriedly polite adieux to the two ladies at Brompton, mounted his horse, and rode to the West of England. If such change of scene and climate did not efface Miss Wheeler's image from his mind, he would try the effect of foreign travel.

Before starting, his last words to the mistress of Knebworth were those of duty and benediction: "God," he said, "knows that, notwithstanding the dejection and despondency making me often so silent, sometimes so querulous, I am tenderly attached and grateful to my dearest mother. Hence my readiness, as now, to sacrifice so much that is nearest and dearest to my heart, if by so

doing, as in all the great events of my life, I can secure her approbation, and prevent her regretting or being ashamed of the kindness and affection she has shown me." Edward Bulwer's experiences at Bath came in usefully for *Paul Clifford*. At Cheltenham he found much material for the sketches of provincial life and character, as seen in the genteel setting of watering-places that gave themselves the air of Belgravia or Hyde Park. He had visited these resorts in childhood with his mother; at Clifton he found in 1825 the same doctor who had attended him during a serious illness many years before. This was a Dr. Budd, one of a gifted and famous medical family which for successive generations supplied the entire country between Bath and Barnstaple with the cleverest and still best-remembered practitioners. One of these Budds it was who afterwards brought Bulwer-Lytton out of serious internal troubles incidental to advanced middle age. Another was instrumental in securing Benjamin Disraeli a new lease of life. To a third, if not the same, belongs a share in the honour of preserving the life of King Edward VII in his serious illness of 1872.

The western tour reinvigorated his nervous system; it did not heal the malady of heart contracted at the tea-party which introduced him to Miss Wheeler. His next remedial effort was to re-cross the English Channel; before the spring of 1826 had far advanced, or perhaps had even fairly set in, he had established himself in his old quarters at Paris or its neighbourhood. His Versailles study now witnessed, on his second stay there, the same systematic industry in the planning of works and the hunting up of authorities, as on his former visit. The morning's meditative absorption in books and papers was followed by afternoon rides in the forest—all in exactly the same order as if they had not been broken off two months earlier. At a distance of twelve miles, in the capital itself,

Mrs. Cunningham's house was still open to him. The coming fall (1830) of the monarchical system may not yet have cast its shadows on the fashionable life of the country. But for Edward Bulwer the charm of novelty was gone. His early acquaintances were still there, but in vain he looked for the brightness and distinction that had made the Faubourg St. Germain a Parisian paradise when, so short a time since, he had consorted with the la Rochejacqueleins as one of themselves. Now as then, indeed, for a week or more together, he lived close to, if not in the thick of, scandals and *tracasseries* of which all Europe was talking. Great ladies and leaders of fashion had declared internecine war against each other. The Duchesse de Firmaçon, Talleyrand's niece, charged the Duchesse de Guiche, Count d'Orsay's sister, with having robbed her of a favourite cavalier, adding that she regretted not being a man, or a lady of the half-world, that she might challenge her to deadly combat in the Bois de Boulogne. The Duchesse de Guiche's classical style had won for her the *sobriquet* of "the lovely Ida." The Duchesse de Firmaçon, who had recently caused the most famous duel of the time, notwithstanding her bad teeth, struck our pilgrim as being the most *piquant*, seductive little imp and mischievous sprite he had ever seen.

Paris society was then in a rather confused state of transition from the *régime* of an exclusive Bourbonism towards the citizen monarchy of the Orleanists. Bulwer once more moved at will behind the social and political scenes. A full diary kept by him during this period, had it ever existed or should it prove accessible now, would be quite the most generally interesting of his autobiographical fragments. Neither his son nor the most intimate friend both of son and father—John Forster—thought he had written more on the subject than was afterwards incidentally condensed into *The Parisians*. Mrs. Cunningham, like

Bulwer himself, had hoped that the process of gathering these experiences and the intellectual interest they might arouse would restore him to a healthy mental state in which there should be no room for enfeebling memories of his first love or even undesirably vivid recollections of Miss Wheeler herself. Instead, however, of disappearing, the Byronic heart ailments rather increased in malignance and complexity. The troubles of his inner life in part reflected the stormy influences of his epoch in general, and more particularly the intellectually disquieting tendency of his literary studies. In his remarks on the life of Schiller* he quotes approvingly Goethe's dictum that the most universal effect of the highest genius is to unsettle; so had it been with Cervantes, Bacon, Luther, Milton; so in Bulwer's own day was it with Byron and Wordsworth. And any disturbance of the settled course of opinion, right or wrong, must, he argued, do evil as well as good. Before the forces producing what Carlyle calls "the storm and stress" school † purify and strengthen, with the individual as with the nation, they necessarily fever and convulse. "Worst of all," he continues; "there will be a servile herd of imitators, mixing up on their staring canvas the sepia of Matthew Lewis" (author of *The Monk*) "with the gamboge and vermilion of Lord Byron. Even more deplorable than the resulting daubs is the ineradicable stain which will now and again be left on individual character."

Advised by Mrs. Cunningham to become settled in life, Bulwer said he was too proud to marry for money, too poor to marry without it. As regards marrying for love, he had already loved too well. Here, then, thought Mrs. Cunningham, was the old creation of boyish phantasmagoria still blocking the path to rest, happiness, and use-

* *Life of Schiller*, p. 217, "Kneblworth" edition.

† *Ibid.*, p. 218.

fulness in her friend's life. And now, as ill-luck would have it, had come a new and more serious attack. Mrs. Cunningham knew a mother's affection for her son may be as exacting and as jealous as that of a mistress for her lover. She, at least, shrewdly perceived that to scheme, as Mrs. Bulwer was now doing, at cutting short, once and for ever, the love passages between Miss Wheeler and her son was the most certain way of ensuring and precipitating the result so much feared by the fond mother for her son. In letters from Versailles to Paris, and in conversation when they happened to meet, the moody and lovelorn philosopher, called by Mrs. Cunningham, indifferently, "Childe Harold" and "Diogenes," dwelt on the impossibility of doing justice to the sentiment—deeper, nobler, and tenderer than love—with which the adorable Rosina had filled him. That was a delicate point which Mrs. Cunningham thought it well just then not to argue. When he had, for the second time, returned to England, and his murmurings against his lot became more continuously and bitterly Byronic than before, the lady suggested a supplementary course of foreign travel, not necessarily including Paris. "Thoroughly," she said, "explore Italy; it will help you with the books you told me you thought of writing" (*Rienzi* and *Last Days of Pompeii*). Meanwhile, Edward Bulwer's path had been crossed by a fresh vexation. Though at times rather vaguely, a parliamentary seat had always filled a place in his plan of life; recently circumstances favoured—and, indeed, seemed to put beyond a doubt—his return for Hertford. Here, during absence from Knebworth, he was to be supplanted by a friend who successfully intrigued to make the constituency his own. Thus, some thirty years before *My Novel* was published, its author had personally experienced something of the mortification inflicted on his patron by Randal Leslie, the clever private secretary, who adroitly chooses

his time for transferring the confidence of the electors from his chief to himself.

The course of study and writing mapped out by Bulwer for his second long stay abroad went on steadily, notwithstanding his own perplexities and distractions. Those disquietudes might, indeed, have worn themselves out if the excellent Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, to secure her end—the disentanglement of the Wheeler complication—had trusted rather to time than to her own maternal devices.

By a polite convention tact is spoken of as if in some special sense it were, above all things, a feminine intuition. As a fact, even with men or women of birth or breeding, it is, for the most part, acquired rather than instinctive; in any high development it is probably less common with women than with men, if only because the former, considering it a gift of nature, spare themselves the pain necessary for its successful cultivation. Certainly, at the juncture now reached, her intellectual attributes, her moral perfections, and her mother's love, did not prevent a striking display of tactlessness by Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton. The methods by which she proceeded to oppose and to diplomatize against the match were those that she ought to have foreseen must certainly defeat her own objects, confirm and clench her son's attachment to the young lady. From being a matter between Edward Bulwer and Rosina Wheeler, the affair now became a feminine duel in which the two principals were Rosina Wheeler and her lover's mother. In both the strongest passion of woman's nature—the love of power—was roused to a deadly height. The Irish blood of the daughter of the house of Lizzard Connel was up. The heiress of the Lyttons, with the strong will and fevered ambition of her mother's family the Jodrells, had vowed that the "Limerick girl" should never be the mistress of Knebworth. Let the facts now be looked at from the point of view which, rationally, might be taken

A TWO-FOLD CAREER MATURED 77

by Rosina Wheeler and her friends. A young lady in the position and with the opportunities of Governor Doyle's niece, apart from something like disinterested affection, could have had at her age no material motive for forcing her way into a family not disposed to welcome her. To Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton she seemed, indeed, an unscrupulous adventuress who, his senior by a year, was using her charms and her greater experience of the world to immesh Edward Bulwer in her toils. It was, of course, as natural for Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton to depreciate a possible but undesired daughter-in-law as it was to overvalue the boy who had always been the pride of her heart. As a fact, however, in the marriage-market slang, Edward Bulwer could scarcely, in 1826, have seemed to the Wheeler family a "great catch." He was, indeed, known for a young man of brilliant promise, considerable expectations, and some achievement. His university career and the reputation he had won on taking his degree were, to some extent, autobiographically reflected in a novel then perhaps in his mind, but not published till eighteen years later. The original of Ardworth in *Lucretia* must, indeed, be looked for, less in its author himself than as regards some traits in his friend Cockburn, as regards others in W. Mackworth Praed. The legal knowledge and skill of the character just mentioned were suggested by the friend who was to become Lord Chief Justice. The academic distinction and the scholarship, classical or modern, were suggested by Praed. For the rest, Edward Bulwer's brains belonged to himself alone.

The qualities, however, which had first impressed Miss Wheeler—his fine manners, his distinguished appearance, and his conversational brightness—were shared by him with many young men of fashion and birth, such as the young lady was constantly in the habit of meeting in London drawing-rooms. She was herself a reigning beauty,

with other chances at her command. Nor were Edward Bulwer's family connections and means decidedly superior to those of Francis Massy Wheeler's daughter. He had, certainly, never known what it was to want money (except, indeed, for an hour or so when, as already related, he could not pay an inn bill at Scarborough). Practically his mother allowed him an open credit at her banker's. Still, she might at any moment cut off the supplies and leave her son a poor man. On the other hand, Miss Wheeler's relations were socially well-placed and pecuniarily well-to-do. Her own personal endowments were a fortune in themselves. She had, however, all the pride and warmth of the Irish temperament, and more perhaps than its usual resolution and obstinacy. Mrs. Bulwer, by not troubling to conceal a disapproval of her son's passion, had, in effect, condemned its object. Well and good. Miss Wheeler accepted the challenge thus thrown down. She was quite content that it should be war to the knife between them. Who was Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton or Mrs. Lytton-Bulwer, or whatever she chose to call herself, that she should put a black mark against a young Irish gentlewoman whom her son had the good taste to admire? The older lady might have remained to all appearance neutral; she might have trusted to her maternal authority, reinforced by a hint of an allowance to be stopped. Either of these courses would have gained time, and in such a matter a wise delay would have been almost a guarantee of success. The plan actually adopted by her combined every conceivable form of disadvantage. Instead of so playing upon Miss Wheeler's pride as to make that young lady dismiss her lover, Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's tactics had the effect of wounding and irritating Miss Wheeler's sensibilities, with the result that her gratification at the young man's attentions co-operated with her feminine vanity to produce indignation and resentment against the maternal interference; she would

become Edward Bulwer's betrothed to spite the mother if not because she loved the son.

Personal prejudices intensified Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's objections to Miss Wheeler as a daughter-in-law. Within an hour of her being the first to notice, at Miss Berry's, the "singularly beautiful face," the owner of that face had openly indulged her powers of satire and mimicry at Mrs. Bulwer's expense. A turn of this sort, indiscriminately exercised, may well have struck Mrs. Bulwer as not likely to promote the domestic happiness of one so morbidly sensitive and overweeningly self-conscious as her son. To avert the matrimonial danger she dreaded, Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's worldly wisdom and maternal address, while she herself kept in the background, ought to have found a way of creating delays and difficulties which, not visibly due to any action on her part, might have seemed to both the young people like the voice of destiny itself forbidding the banns. Instead, the fond and foolish mother allowed apprehensions for her heir and her disapproval of his sweetheart to betray her into the one course calculated actively to enlist all that was chivalrous in the young man against the mother and on the side of the mistress. As a result of these tactics Edward Bulwer soon perceived that he must choose between his duty as a son and his loyalty as a lover. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton was a whimsical, eccentric, clever, and scheming woman of the world, bent upon securing a great career for her son and, as a stepping-stone to this, a brilliant marriage. That son Rosina Wheeler had come to admire and love, gradually confessing to a full requital of his passionate attachment. Thus it came about that the two ladies, in their eager contention for Edward Bulwer's ownership, may have been ready to act upon the maxim of all being fair in love and war. To maintain his character as a dutiful and affectionate son Bulwer, in the present matter, really made some personal sacrifices.

In England he put himself much less in Rosina Wheeler's way than he would have done had he not honestly desired to subject his feelings about that young lady to a genuine test. Thus, after, on his second foreign absence, he had settled in or near Paris, little regular correspondence passed between the two imperfectly declared lovers. Again and again, after the manner of persons who have had an early miscarriage of affection before and since the Byronic era, the young man who from being the Paris rake had become the Versailles recluse told Mrs. Cunningham that if he married at all, of which he had no idea, it would certainly not be till he was far on the shady side of middle age. "That is," he added, "supposing, which I very much doubt, that I have any middle age." He had not long fulfilled the years of legal manhood when he began to talk to Mrs. Cunningham as one who was nearer forty than thirty. He had lived his life, loved his love, and had now "fallen into the sere and yellow leaf." All this was in the Byronic falsetto which had been growing upon him since boyhood. In his own case the Ealing episode corresponded with the older poet's juvenile passion for Mary Anne Chaworth. The parallel between Byron and himself was, he could complacently reflect, at least in this matter, tolerably complete. Yet even now, seen through the mist of time and tears, the identity of Bulwer's Lucy D——, all too fondly cherished as her memory may have been, had become a little blurred. Now she was recalled as the daughter of a gentleman gambler and scamp; now she had transformed herself into a village maiden, first seen at her lace pillow near the cottage door.

The important thing here to notice is that this second absence abroad entirely failed to produce the object for which it had been undertaken—forgetfulness of Rosina Wheeler. And this though that young lady pursued the traveller with no letters, while Edward Bulwer himself did

but occasionally write to her. Temporary separation from each other was, in fact, strengthening the mutual attachment which—at least, on the Bulwer-Lytton side—it had been expected to eradicate from the bosoms of both. Rosina Wheeler not only held undivided possession of her lover's heart; her nationality and taste coloured his literary meditations and suggested new subjects for his pen. During the first of his two French sojourns in 1825-6, *Pelham* had been largely written, if not completed; at the same time other works had been planned or, if begun, had been advanced a stage. Since then his inspiration had come from the lady of his love. She was descended from a long line of Irish patriots, probably kings, and herself possessed by the characteristic glories of her race. Hence the choice of a subject for the elaborate and long though unpublished poem which, during his second stay abroad, occupied him in the first half of 1826.

This composition, called *O'Neil*, was, as he told Mrs. Cunningham, full of revels, banshees, and scaffolds. Like another work in a similar vein, undertaken about the same time, and presently to be noticed, it was written before he had ever been in Ireland himself. Suggested, as he told her, by the vivid word-pictures of her own conversation, *O'Neil* was dedicated to Miss Wheeler in unusually glowing terms. His affection, said the poet, had guided his pen, as it had prescribed its theme. Miss Wheeler was reminded that she was not only an individual paragon, the empress of the writer's soul, but at once the type and glory of her nationality. "This idle tribute," as he calls *O'Neil*, was, too, designed by its writer for a compliment not only to an individual, but to a race. In other words, as he himself puts it, Bulwer (who, by the by, had not yet crossed St. George's Channel) recognized in Rosina Wheeler supreme gifts of person and intellect, making her peerless self a symbol of whatever was

most beautiful, brightest, and best in the rarely endowed Celtic race. Her mind was compact of vivid and various graces. The fascination of her loveliness knew neither equal nor fault. Then, in nobility of character, piety and purity of soul, she presented an amalgam, epitome and condensation of her countrywomen's noblest characteristics. Admiring gazers on the masterpiece of Apelles, in their adoration of the artist, yielded their homage to the beauties of the whole nation. So now the poet of *O'Neil* offered his homage to a people's patriotism and beauty when inscribing this product of his pen to the concentrated loveliness of One.

Here was the extravagance of youthful devotion conveyed in words whose vehemence recalls the pitiable excess of superlatives with which John Keats's letters and verses set forth his passion for Fanny Brawne. But then there is this difference between the two. Keats, a livery stable keeper's son, a second-rate surgeon's apprentice, received no intellectual discipline, derived his only education from the self-directed study of the early and of the Elizabethan literature, and lacked every advantage of social opportunity and station. Bulwer-Lytton, well-born, well-bred, nurtured in an atmosphere of social and intellectual refinement, not only knew the great classical masterpieces, but ought to have imbued himself with the self-control of thought and expression not less inculcated by the Greek exemplars than were lucidity of thought and clearness of outline. Plutarch's *Moral Essays* had been studied closely by Bulwer; * they should have put him on his guard against the emotional excess which, caused by intellectual negligence, betrays the unwary into the worst vulgarity,—that of missing the due proportions of things. Though still beginning life on his own account, he had passed the first heats and rawness

* No writer or speaker is less open than Bulwer-Lytton to the charge of second-hand quotations. *Caxtoniana* and his other shorter compositions make to Plutarch more than twenty references, each showing a careful mastery of the context, strange, even to most English scholars, as that is.

of youth. He had studied, as it were before the looking-glass, the artistic pose of a solitary mourner over the ashes of extinct excitement. Even fidelity to his earliest carefully-adopted model should have operated as an effectual check ; for Byron, though, in Matthew Arnold's words, " he bore through Europe the pageant of his bleeding heart," while parading his self-inflicted woes, gave no encouragement to literary hysteria, wrote well within himself, and when most preoccupied with his own anguish, expressed it as one who had a fund of strength in reserve.

Bulwer-Lytton's grandfather, Richard Warburton Lytton, it has already been seen, had inculcated with a birch-rod the elements of social morality upon his grandchild. Unfortunately for the latter that scholarly relative died before his descendant had been encouraged to think himself a poet, or his frown might have warned the young poet to aim at reproducing in his diction the Hellenic serenity and composure. A little competent criticism and frank counsel were much wanted by the youthful versifier. Warburton Lytton's friend, the encyclopædic Parr, had indeed confirmed the praise given by the private tutor Wallington to Edward Bulwer's *Ismael* ; how, without being considered churlish, could he have done otherwise ? No compunctions of affinity might have prevented the grandfather, had he lived, pronouncing a less flattering but a more instructive verdict. The truth is, Edward Bulwer was in great danger of being spoiled by domestic or friendly admiration and praise. His most amiable qualities—affectionateness, and wish for the good opinion of those he loved—increased the peril, and so tended to confirm the affectations, extravagances, or conceits that in later years were to expose him to ridicule or censure, both often exaggerated and unjust.

The composition now so effusively inscribed to the object of his idolatry was very well for an undisguised imitation of Byron's *Rhymed Tales*. It contains, however, a greater

variety of character and incident than was ever brought together by Byron in a single piece. Its *dramatis personæ* are not puppets or lay figures, but living men or women who decide the action of the play. For eventually *O'Neil* was adapted to the stage. Brought to light long after the poem had been forgotten in England, it was successfully presented as a play in a New York theatre. The poem, in its original as well as in its dramatized shape, is full of inequalities, wants polish and smoothness, but contains some good lines, occasionally reflecting the writer's philosophical studies at the time of its writing. One Greek thinker, Thales, had found the principle of all created things in water, another in air, and a third, Heracleitus, in fire. This last view had already found a place in Bulwer's philosophical epistles to Mrs. Cunningham; it now suggested a soliloquy in *O'Neil* :—

He turned, he sat beside his hearth, and viewed
 The fitful fire, that friend of solitude,
 That strange and mystic spirit wherein is shown,
 Perchance, some type or shadow of our own,
 Our own internal agent which requires,
 Like that from earth, the fuel for its fires,
 Which pours its powers into the meanest things,
 Quickens the senseless block to which it clings;
 Now low, now soaring, now but formed to bless,
 With temper'd light, now blasting with excess;
 Which warms, pervades, ennobles while it preys
 On the dull substance which supplies its blaze.
 And when that substance is consumed, oh, where
 Speeds the wild spirit?—Answer me, O Air!

Then follows a graceful tribute to a mother's love. This might as well have been dispensed with in the original, seeing that allegiance to his sweetheart was then placing him in a position of revolt against his mother. *O'Neil*, however, marked an epoch in Bulwer's literary evolution. Thus far he had considered himself the destined successor of Spenser and Byron in the chosen walk of their genius. *O'Neil's* completion convinced him that he had misdirected

his imaginative powers. It was not, he now declared, by metre that he would fulfil the end of his own existence. Still, from his childish verses in *Ismael* to the date of *Weeds and Wild Flowers*, preceding *O'Neil* by less than a year, poetical composition, however unconsciously to himself, had been preparing Bulwer both for prose writing and for oratory. The same exercise had served a like end with Byron, whose *Letter to Isaac Disraeli* and the most effective of whose other polemical essays did not see the light till long after *Hours of Idleness* had been forgotten. It was the same with Bolingbroke, with Burke, Fox, and more notably with Canning and Sheridan. But the precedent which, had he thought about the matter at all, would have impressed Edward Bulwer most, was that of the two Pitts. His article *Pitt and Fox* in the autumn number of the *Quarterly Review*, 1855,* a good specimen of his essay style at its best, is not only packed with unhackneyed details, but is full of autobiographical interest. As a drawing-room bard Bulwer may have had Byron too much before him ; in his training for political life, the second Pitt remained for years his chief model. As a Greek scholar, notwithstanding the depreciatory remarks of his rival Fox, William Pitt was first-rate. So Bulwer also had made a good Grecian of himself. The "grand old man" † who in his youth had been fond of versifying, amateur theatricals, and play writing, had encouraged his favourite second son to compose not only poems but a drama in rhymed couplets, still, or but recently, treasured among the Stanhope manuscripts at Chevening. The facts now mentioned were not ignored by Bulwer-Lytton ; long afterwards he drew attention to them in a *Quarterly Review* article on Pitt and Fox in 1855.‡

* Reprinted in *Quarterly Essays*, "Knebworth" edition, p. 176.

† This expression, in the *Quarterly* article first applied to Chatham, was, I have it on good authority, much taken up at the time ; thus "catching on," it reads to-day like a presage of a description still familiar to modern ears in connection with W. E. Gladstone.

‡ *Quarterly Review Essays*, "Knebworth" edition, p. 176.

Even for his own amusement or instruction, and with little or no thought of publication, Bulwer-Lytton made no other serious metrical effort during the prolonged process of spiritual, moral, intellectual fermentation that occupied the greater part of his twenty-second year. Miss Wheeler's nationality and interests suggested to him, it is true, another Irish narrative, but in prose, *Glenallan*. Here, as in all the earlier, and in not a few of his later products, it is the personality and experiences of the author himself that are reflected throughout. Two personages bear the Glenallan name; the father is a portrait, readily recognizable, of the writer's maternal grandfather, Richard Warburton Lytton; the younger, with the Christian name of Ruthven, is as unmistakably Edward Bulwer himself. There is more variety of character and incident in the prose fiction than in the poem. But as regards plot, motive, general idea, and the broad outline of the principal figures, *O'Niel* and *Glenallan* are the same.

Bulwer-Lytton had dabbled in Rosicrucianism long before writing or thinking out *Zanoni*. *Glenallan* distinctly foreshadowed the fascination which the supernatural machinery, almost entirely, if not quite absent from his earlier books, *Peckham*, *The Disowned*, *Devercux*, *Paul Clifford*, and others, was, in 1842, to assert over him in what he told Lord Carnarvon he liked best of all his novels, *Zanoni*, and which was not afterwards much resorted to till his latest works.

During his second season (1825-6) of various reading, meditation, and practical solitude, not only in Versailles, but in Paris itself, we know from his own words, he first faced the fact of throwing in his lot with the regular workmen of the literary craft, and, like them, living by his pen. He now wrote with ease and confidence. The various knowledge he had patiently and methodically acquired entitled him to think he might instruct as well as please the public. The intention of making Rosina Wheeler his

wife had never wavered. If his mother stopped or seriously reduced his allowance, he realized that the deficiency must be made good by his own exertions. As yet no publisher had paid or offered him a penny for anything he had written. His idea, indeed, had always been to pass for a fine gentleman of intellectual tastes, devoted to literary study, capable of literary performance, but by circumstances of family and fortune set quite apart from any of the poor devils who turn authors to keep the wolf from the door. In his union of social and literary ambition the Bulwer of the twenties suggests a resemblance to the Restoration dramatist Congreve, as described by Macaulay in his well-known essay. Bulwer felt that he had in him the making of a great writer, and such a writer he was determined to be. By birth a member of the privileged classes, he thoroughly appreciated and intensely enjoyed all the advantages of an exceptionally fortunate position. The consciousness of this sometimes showed itself by manner or word in an undisguised feeling that the one quality he could have in common with the ruck of literary craftsmen was industry. All this, indeed, gradually changed. Once his pen had brought him prosperity and fame, no man took more pleasure and pride in his profession, was prepared to co-operate more heartily for its well-being, served it more loyally, or greeted with more genuine cordiality his fellow-workers in any branch of literary art. The truth is that on his return to England, in 1826, after his second stay abroad, and thereafter throughout his whole course, two Bulwer-Lyttons may be seen. The one, almost as indifferent to the vulgar cares of everyday life as an epicurean deity, could play equally well the literary patron and the irresponsible literary worker who pursued in his mind, or with his pen, one train of fancy or speculation until the whim took him to divert his thoughts into another channel, with no worldly fears for the future because no

shadow of material anxiety had darkened his past. The other personality, who began to show himself at the date now reached, was that of a clear-headed, shrewd man of business, consistently, indeed, resolved on giving to the public only his very best, but equally keen on finding the most advantageous market for his wares. To do that he knew he must study the popular taste, as well as, both by choice of a subject and workmanship, satisfy and sometimes even anticipate the popular demand. Thus far he had attempted nothing to win the favour of general readers, or to be courted by publishers. Paternoster Row and Fleet Street might be less appreciative of his efforts than the private friends who smiled on the products of his youthful muse.

Periodicals of every kind, however, were now in course of multiplying. The keepsakes and albums edited by ladies of quality had been to Bulwer-Lytton's boyhood what some more substantial miscellanies were to become at a later date ; he did not live to see the monthly magazines, which in the present day compete with science platforms and even Parliament itself for the latest deliverances of philosophers and statesmen, or invite suburbia and the provinces to meet ambassadors, tariff reformers, and founders of new religions, at the feast of reason and flow of soul, called from its striking resemblance to the Platonic original a symposium. The presentiment of being some day obliged to write for money was followed by a conviction that as an author of books which were to sell, he could not escape a two-fold dependence—first on popular favour, secondly on the goodwill of publishers. The public and the great literary middlemen from whom the retail booksellers bought were now of the same importance to the writer as the eighteenth-century patron who was wheedled by a flattering dedication into paying the cost of an edition. The journalist, however, so long as he pleased the editor, might be his own master. Bulwer's thoughts, therefore, in 1826,

seriously turned to the opportunities which the daily or weekly press was beginning to offer. The modern newspaper, however, still remained in its infancy. Nor, without some special and painful effort, could Bulwer have developed or cultivated the habit of accurately observing un congenial subjects, the hair-trigger intellect, and what he himself called the art of turning round upon a sixpence, requisite for leader writing and paragraph manufacture. A magazinist and essayist he was by nature. In this capacity his best and ripest work was reserved for middle age, and exists in *Caxtoniana*, originally contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and more fully to be noticed hereafter. Long, however, before the date of these compositions, even of his successful pamphlets, or his equally successful *Quarterly* essays, he had put himself into training for the periodical press. On his final return to England, in 1826, he brought with him from abroad a large mass of notes for essays and articles, some of which might have done well enough for journals which, like the *Saturday Review*, in 1855, and its many imitations, appeared subsequently when Bulwer was too busy to think about them. Meanwhile, should he fail as a writer of books, he had elaborated titles and schemes for occasional compositions innumerable. Some idea of their character and scope will be given by a few extracts from the long list. These at least show how industriously, on the eve of becoming a professional book writer, Bulwer was qualifying himself for the manufacture of the journalistic commodities known as "middles."

Conversation and the Chief Conversationalists of the Century ; Love à la Mode ; Hades, or High Life Below Stairs ; Fashionable Impressions, by a Débutant ; Literary Lions ; Posthumous Letters from the King of the Sandwich Islands ; London Travels in the Height of the Season, by a Persian Gentleman Rejoicing in the Name of Muley Eidor Moratcham ; Bored ; Social Philosophers ; The Age and Its Worshipers ;

Typical Characters. Such are the stock subjects, with a few suggestions of treatment, jotted down to be worked out, just as a tourist with a taste for draughtsmanship may "dash off" glimpses of Swiss scenery for subsequent expansion into complete pictures. The Irish pieces, prose and verse, having been finished to please Rosina Wheeler, his next thought was to improve himself by a course of literary exercises undertaken for the special purpose of enriching, as well as clearing, his mind and maturing his style. The actual writing was not begun immediately, and was in some cases delayed till 1829. The industrial programme of 1826 included *Eidor Moratcham*, which was carried further towards completion than any other item in the catalogue. The intellectual influence which chiefly stimulated young men with a turn for writing in London society during the twenties continued to be Voltaire. And by Voltaire, both as regards literary manner and matter, none were more keenly affected than Bulwer-Lytton and Benjamin Disraeli. The real intimacy between these two belongs to a later date than that now reached (to 1829-30), and will be dwelt upon in its proper place. Their acquaintance, however, began some time earlier. Among the places where they frequently met each other was the Buckinghamshire home, Bradenham, of Isaac Disraeli, Benjamin's father, often consulted on literary matters by Bulwer in his earlier days. At this time both these brilliant youths were full of Voltaire's *Candide*. To each of them the learned recluse of Bradenham gave the same counsel: "Having read *Zadig*, the *Persian Tales*, and *Candide*, you should now ascertain Voltaire's debt to his master Lucian." They did so, reading together in the Buckinghamshire beechwoods the *Dialogues of the Dead*. As a consequence, there is quite as much of Lucian as of Voltaire in Benjamin Disraeli's *Ixion* and *Popanilla*, as well as in Bulwer-Lytton's *Moratcham*. In *Ixion* the Olympian father of gods and men is

George IV, the divinities of the other sex are the ladies who then ruled Piccadilly and Mayfair.

The social sketches in Disraeli's earlier novels are only superficial ; the two pieces inspired by Lucian, *Popanilla* and *Ixion*, show the writer's own mind. No such revelation is made by any of Bulwer's performances, about the same time in the Voltairian or Lucianic vein. Still there is a literary interest in the fact that the two men, afterwards to be Cabinet associates, during the twenties drank their inspiration from an identical source, plied their pens beneath the same roof, and, when the day's work was done, compared notes of their performance. *Popanilla* is a satire on the English constitution. Bulwer's *jeu d'esprit* is mere extravaganza, incidentally hitting some social fashions and persons of the time. *Muley Eidor*, Bulwer's hero, by birth a Persian, by profession a lady-killer, visits these cold shores of liberty and rheumatism, duly to admire the luxuriant blossom shown by our native flowers of feminine loveliness. The record of his experiences makes very fair fun of English manners, customs, and polity at conventionally vulnerable points. *Muley Eidor Moratcham* is not without a few autobiographical touches. Bulwer-Lytton, though seen to advantage in the saddle, as well as accomplished with the fencing foils and boxing gloves, was not a sportsman ; so *Muley Eidor*, a gentleman of actively indolent disposition, is perfectly content with sauntering through life from sentiment to sentiment, with walking or riding through woods and fields, never sighing for the excitement of killing birds and foxes, desiring only to follow the footsteps and admire the features of beauty without any destructive purpose. Some ten years after the Persian visitor had been endowed by his creator with these attributes, came a passage in *Night and Morning*, judging field sports by the Persian, which was Bulwer-Lytton's own standard. To gratify the impulse of the moment—which, "though *not*

cruelty in the boy, may be pampered by prosperity into cruelty in the man,"—Philip Beaufort keeps his hand in for September, by shooting a swallow in August; his cousin Arthur's remonstrance is met by: "Oh! that is *sport*, all fair; it's not to hurt the swallow, but to obtain skill."

Works calling for more concentration of labour and study than those already passed in review were begun or at least planned during this period. His two earliest novels, both of them only published after the date now reached, were almost ready for the printer. The first of these to see the light, *Falkland*, showed him to have read Goethe as carefully as he had studied Voltaire. His first visit to Germany was not paid till 1841, nine years after Goethe's death. The Versailles list of things to be written contained an essay on *Wilhelm Meister*. Bulwer-Lytton's most congenial and successful work was that described by Matthew Arnold as the first business of the poet, namely the criticism of life. Nor could any critic of existence have taken more pains to fit himself for his work by close observation of social character and conditions. Bulwer's self-education was, as has been said, at many points a copy of that which he saw had proved so useful to the younger Pitt; into mathematics, indeed, he never went even so far as Pitt thought necessary the better to fit himself for active life. But in physical science and metaphysics Bulwer kept pace with Pitt exactly. He did not, that is, carry his philosophical studies much beyond Locke on the *Human Understanding*, though, as has already been seen, he worked as hard at political economy as if he were reading for honours in a Cambridge tripos or the Oxford Schools. Sir William Hamilton he read later in life, quotes constantly, and sometimes through whole paragraphs even reproduces, in his maturer essays. Thus, Hamilton had spoken of first principles which defy all philosophy; the Hamiltonian

remark, quoted approvingly in *Caxtoniana*, suggests a page or so of expository comment.* Edward Bulwer's juvenile acquaintance with Hegel was not maintained; he had, however, mastered at Cambridge David Hume's essays as well as treatise on human nature. Hume, therefore, as might be expected, frequently appears in the most carefully elaborated of Bulwer's shorter pieces—*Caxtoniana*. There he is truly described as not only the subtlest of all our metaphysicians, but the one who makes his meaning most clear from misconception. "Contrast," said Bulwer, "the rugged obscurity of Locke with the lucidity of Hume,—due to the care with which his expressions are selected and the intelligence of his reader quickened by the charm that lightens the fatigue of its tension."† William Pitt's interest in abstract thinkers had been that of the statesman grinding his intellect upon their treatises. The real attraction possessed by philosophy for Bulwer was its disciplinary effect both on the writer and the reader. Another reason for the fascination found by Bulwer in Hume was the Scotch philosopher's cosmopolitan associations; Hume had served on a diplomatic mission in France, and had been intimate with the chief encyclopædists, before he applied his stimulus, not only to Scotch thought, but to the real founder of modern philosophy, Immanuel Kant himself. He was not only the chief object of Bulwer's intellectual worship; to his English admirer he impersonated the *clairvoyance* supremely conspicuous in Shakespeare, but wanting to none of those who really taught their generation, or founded schools in letters or thought. The subject is discussed in Essay IV, *Caxtoniana*; it calls, therefore, only for a few words here. This double-sightedness of the mind seemed to Bulwer the attribute, scarcely more

* Essay VII, "On the Management of Money," p. 63, "Knebworth" edition.

† "Rhythm in Prose," *Caxtoniana*, VIII, p. 79, "Knebworth" edition.

of Shakespeare, than of the writer to whom he gives the first place among the early English novelists—Richardson. Mentioning the author of *Clarissa Harlowe*, certainly, he says, the one creature in the world whom a quiet, prim, respectable, printer could never have encountered in the flesh, was a daring, magnificent libertine like Lovelace ; yet Richardson not only beholds him with the eye of imagination, but analyses and dissects him—minutes every impulse in that lawless heart, unravels every web in that wily brain. The discovery of a like gift in the great German thinker explains Bulwer's enthusiasm about him whom he calls the clairvoyant of Königsberg ; for here was a man who, having never been out of Prussia, described Westminster Bridge so exactly that an Englishman asked him how many years he had lived in London. Bulwer's interest, however, in these mental phenomena was such as would naturally be taken by a man of letters, not by a mental philosopher, which Bulwer never professed to be. Schiller, concerning whom Bulwer wrote much and well, was indeed Kant's disciple ; so Goethe had his declared master in Spinoza. Among English writers of the Victorian Age, Tennyson, Thackeray, and Thomas Hughes, who wrote *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, had sat at the feet of F. D. Maurice. To one master of massive learning and patient thought Bulwer had in youth submitted himself. The opinions on philosophy Whewell had taught him to form at Cambridge, remained with him through life, and were as much with him in the twenties as when, some years later, he gave expression to them in *The Student*. Briefly summarized, it comes to this. Moral philosophy, in itself the grandest of all sciences, if abstracted from its ethical issues, and attenuated to mere metaphysics, becomes the most pedantic and frivolous of pursuits. Helvetius charms the fancy, sharpens the intellect, but leaves the soul empty. Locke and Condillac disappoint and evade the deepest

and most agonizing of one's questions. Nevertheless, the result of these studies was, in his own words, to assure him of a certain inward strength, enabling him to subdue the errors and sustain the sorrows of his heart. For did not inner consciousness reveal the birthright and Eden of immortality? Thus not metaphysics, but analogy rebuilt a crumbling faith, transmuted doubts into the confiding immaterial hope which suits the human soul.* These words contain as in a nutshell the human message permeating *The Caxtons* and *Kenelm Chillingly*.

Some idea of Bulwer's versatile industry in selecting subjects for essays, and in completing outlines for their treatment, at the point of his course now reached, can be gained from a list of topics and heads for dealing with them given earlier in the present chapter. Literature, however, formed but part of the career which he had mapped out for himself. He never ceased to keep an eye on politics. As he approached the date he had mentally fixed for his marriage, he showed an increasing tendency to treat even literary themes in connection with political developments. That method he contemplated applying to a history of English poetry then much in his mind. Chaucer, Langland, and others, as he told John Forster when speaking to him of this project, were to be considered less as singers than as practical contributors to those religious and political movements of their time leading towards and constituting what is known as the Reformation.

"Enough," exclaims Rasselas, terrified by the recital of the qualifications necessary for the sacred calling, "you have persuaded me that no man can possibly be a poet." Bulwer's parliamentary aspirations were now giving a new turn to his studies. The omniscience postulated by Cicero for the orator really seems for a time to have discouraged him. Nor in the twenties or thirties had the Prussian

* *Student*, pp 250-4, "Knebworth" edition.

historian of Rome framed his indictment against the moribund republic's most eloquent champion. Bulwer had found for himself in Cicero so admired a pattern of industry and of variety in mental accomplishment, that he might have considered Mommsen's estimate of his favourite Roman author to involve a criticism of his own versatility. The remarks now in question occur in Mommsen's *History of Rome*, Vol. IV, page 607, and are as follows : "Cicero was so thoroughly a dabbler as to render it pretty much a matter of indifference to what work he put his hand. By nature a journalist in the very worst sense of the term, abounding, as he himself said, in words, poor beyond all conception in ideas, with the help of a few books he could rapidly have made up a readable essay on any subject whatsoever."

Lord Lytton's *Parisians* contains some incidental allusions to German as well as French politics. Slight though these are, they enable one shrewdly to conjecture how the man who made them would have dealt with the strictures just quoted. It was, he would have said, Mommsen's cue, writing at the time he did, to extol Cæsarism and to belittle every other interest that seemed to stand in its way ; Mommsen had his reward in the triumph of Bismarck's policy, which has made the Hohenzollerns the bullies of Europe. As for the "journalist" sneer, that was directed against what Bismarck himself called the "reptile press of Prussia," at once the object of the Prussian Chancellor's contempt and systematically used by him for the basest purposes. Moreover, Mommsen's blind partisanship makes him absurdly illogical as well as unjust. Extravagantly extolling Cæsar, he calls Pompey commonplace, and the younger Cato a downright fool ; against their worthlessness he sets his hero's greatness. If, however, Cæsar's antagonists were the wretched creatures Mommsen describes, how little credit would their conqueror deserve.

The number and the intensity of the studies he was now pursuing began to cause an apprehension lest he should be overtaken by something like the same intellectual trouble, which he half seriously said had been not only Cicero's, but S. T. Coleridge's. Both of these were cases in which, as he put it, the man carried so many books on the top of his head that he crushed out his brains. To one branch of knowledge Bulwer continued consistently to give a wide berth. His remarks in *Caxtoniana* during the thirties show a real admiration for Mrs. Mary Somerville. That lady's writings had been seen by Bulwer before she published *The Connection of the Sciences*. It was, indeed, some remarks of hers that, when Bulwer felt prolonged literary application telling upon him, made him think of finding relief in exercising another set of intellectual muscles than those called into play by literature. But though animal magnetism was now attracting him, he still failed to develop a genuine interest in natural philosophy. He saw young people of various social degrees stimulated by Lord Brougham's preaching to cram themselves with physical knowledge rather, as he thought, to the detriment of their minds, their social qualities, and their manners. The result was a long-standing prejudice against the new materialism that perverted the ingenuous simplicity of youth. In later years Bulwer had many conversations on this subject with Wilkie Collins, to whom he quoted a letter written by Sir Walter Scott to Miss Edgeworth, expressing disbelief in the alleged tendency of scientific studies to promote genuine intellectual improvement. "All pursuits of that nature," Scott had said, "when pushed to a certain extent, have the effect of hardening the heart." Bulwer could also cite Faraday to the same effect. He had himself heard Faraday's lecture at the Royal Institution, containing the remark: "The education of the judgment has, as its first and last step, humility." "Alas," was

the comment both of the lecturer and of his hearer, "that the investigation of physical forces should so often tend to produce a frame of mind the very opposite of this ! "

Before resuming the course of Bulwer's literary production, some idea may be given of the laborious survey he had undertaken of English prose literature at all periods. The results of this enquiry, belonging to the period of his life now reached, are not brought together in any single work, or even connected series of articles. They are scattered through various essays, the more important of which appeared some time afterwards in the *Quarterly Review*. The materials now mentioned yield a tolerably connected narrative of English literary progress from mediæval times towards its modern developments.

Before the sixteenth century, English prose had been marked by the nervous conciseness that was essentially a Saxon quality. The Tudor epoch brought with it the results of the Reformation and of the classical Renaissance. The freshly opened treasures of Greek, Roman, and Italian poetry elated the English mind with a sense of novel and inexhaustible wealth. New ideas called for an enlarged vocabulary and outlandish combinations of phrase. The Saxon simplicity became overlaid with foreign ornaments, and lost itself in the long and stately periods coming to the romance tongues from the Latin. Hence the contrast between Chaucer, his contemporaries or early successors, and the writers in the reign of Elizabeth and James. Next the translation of the Bible familiarized the ear with Eastern expressions, and imparted an Oriental colour to the whole vernacular. From the literary point of view, exclaims Bulwer, the Reformation was our Pisistratus, the translation of the Bible our Homer. Thus the gigantic images of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, and the royal majesty of Virgil, were contrasted or wildly amalgamated with the

chivalrous grotesque of Ariosto, the adventures of Tancred, and the enchanted gardens of Armida. English letters, indeed, were running a riot of fictitious embellishment that affected even our historians. Even in the province of fact the romances of Plutarch were a popular model before our ancestors knew anything about the grave profundity of Thucydides or the tragic epigram of Tacitus.

In the seventeenth century the philosophy and faith, brought from the fairy meads of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, were presented in the daily dress of English life. The thoughtful, anxious, and busy generation of the Civil War demanded counsels coming home, in Bacon's words, "to their business and bosoms," so plainly put that he who ran might read and understand them. The Restoration substituted for the long sentences of the earlier English the clear succinctness that was French. Replacing the scholastic and fashionable coteries, a sturdy, miscellaneous public looked to literature for help in life. This want was supplied by the plain, unembellished periods of Locke. Martin Luther, however, truly said: "The human mind is like a drunken peasant on horseback,—set it up on one side, and it falls on the other." Prose style had acquired a chasteness or severity. The extravagances of human credulity still remained. If Sir Kenelm Digby argues against astrology, he believes in "sympathetic powders." The Lord Chief Baron agrees with Sir Thomas Browne that an old woman's fits are caused by the devil co-operating with the malice of witches. In this way Bulwer explains the pictorial style of Jeremy Taylor, and of the Norwich knight who wrote *Religio Medici*, finding, it may be, in the superstitious leanings of these seventeenth-century writers an argument for the introduction of the supernatural into his writings. The higher the civilization, the more widely diffused the knowledge, the greater, Bulwer believes, will be the charm found by readers in the romances of the super-

human. The musical and picturesque writers of the seventeenth century, as Bulwer's survey shows, were followed by the terse and telling fluency of Addison, Swift, Steele, the unlaboured dignity, the *senatorius decor* of Bolingbroke. But between the middle of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century there took place a retrograde movement towards the dialect of Sir Piercie Shafton; the far-fetched metaphor, the artificial phrase and Babel word-structures became the fashion. The thought might be trivial to inanity; the one thing required was that the language enclosing it should have an air of stateliness. Syllables were used as the bricks for building up palaces to be inhabited by the meanest of ideas. Johnson ranks among the chief founders of modern English, yet, like Gibbon, Junius, to some degree Burke himself, Johnson goes out of his way to avoid colloquial idiom and diction. Had Bulwer on this point been as autobiographical in the course of his general comments as he is on many others, he might have added that he also does himself less than justice by seldom condescending to the raciness of phrase which, so aptly employed by another great writer of his time, J. A. Froude, helps to heighten literary effect. With Johnson and his disciples, Bulwer continues, the manner was everything; the matter merely an afterthought. Long paper wars were waged on the question whether one bad rhyme, like that of "obscure" and "poor," ought not to vitiate the merit spread over cantos. This, as Bulwer puts it, was to think of nothing in poetry but the top-knots and patches of the muse. The critics of this period, including even the author of the *Elegy in a Churchyard*, and the *Ode to Eton College*, could see little to admire either in the popular writers of their own country or in those of foreign lands. As regards Fielding, Gray thought the incidents in *Joseph Andrews* ill-laid, and without invention; on the other hand, the characters, he admits,

“have a great deal of nature; and Parson Adams is perfectly well.”

Bulwer's bird's-eye view of English literature consists of laboriously collected, shrewd if slight glimpses. The specimens now given are followed by an introduction to the group of writers in whose centre is Charles Lamb. Urbanity, as used by Cicero, suggests a contrast between those who plied their pen in Rome and the writers who, far from the capital, narrowed their views of the world to the limited range of a coterie. To call a French author a Parisian is to bestow on him the highest praise. Why, then, asks Bulwer, should the expression “literary Londoner” carry any disparaging association, or the “Cockney school” be only a term of reproach? To that set belonged an acute and accomplished critic like Hazlitt, and writers so full of personal charm as Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt. The reason seems to be that these men, though differing much from each other in character and in direction of intellect, in literary as personal manner agreed in not cultivating the attributes which the term “urbanity” connotes. They moved in as small a circle as if they lived in a country town. In print they quote, praise, quarrel, and make it up with each other, as if, like the Chinese, they confine the map of the civilized world to their celestial empire, and inscribe on the space left outside the circle: “Corners of earth inhabited by barbarians.”

Thus the *Waverley* novels, when Lamb tried to read them, were thrown aside in disgust. Hazlitt was more persevering, but scarcely less intolerant, and equally inappreciative of their author, whom he declares: “the meanest of mankind.” Of Byron, Hunt is openly contemptuous; while Hazlitt only allows a force of style beyond which Byron seldom gets, and a skill in weaving a tissue of superb commonplaces of which the next generation will know nothing. Leigh Hunt, less exclusive than his fellows, had

some good words for Shelley and Keats. But Hazlitt, while reconciled to Keats after his death, treats Shelley with acrid scorn : " He who wrote the *Ode to the Skylark* is not a poet, but a sophist ; a controversial writer in verse ; he gives us for representations of things rhapsodies of words, and paints allegorical pictures on the cobwebs of his own brain." What Hazlitt mouths out Lamb, of course, approves. Had Bulwer lived to hear them, one can fancy he would have adapted the Oxford lines about the two mutually admiring historians :

Where, from alternate tubs,
Stubbs butters Freeman,
Freeman butters Stubbs.

So Hunt praises Hazlitt, Hazlitt praises Hunt. For " the gentle Elia " both Hunt and Hazlitt have only praise, while Lamb heartily returns the good opinion of both.

From what has now been said, an idea can be formed, not only of the breadth and thoroughness of the reading with which Bulwer prepared himself for his work as writer, but of the literary discrimination and taste acquired by him during these early years of laborious self-culture. His personal opinions on, and relations to, his own contemporaries in letters belong to a later portion of his course, and will be duly treated in their proper place. His opinions about the great prose writers have been given here because they belong to the history of his own literary development. His estimate of writers nearer his own day is always free from jealousy or injustice. The " Cockney school " was a phrase in common use at the time, and was scarcely resented by those whom it included. Nor, in reference to this coterie, does he ignore or underrate a great national service which its members performed. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had, like Lamb, been at Christ's Hospital. That early association made him at home with the " Cockneys " ; they soon adopted his own admiration for Wordsworth

and the "Lake" poets. To the Cockney school, therefore, Bulwer justly gives the credit of helping to popularize the Wordsworthian reaction against the classical verse of Pope, whose supremacy till then had been almost unchallenged. Again, in 1825, Bulwer himself was among the first to discover a new poet in Letitia Elizabeth Landon; he always deprecated his master, Byron's, attacks upon Robert Southey. Meanwhile, it is important to remember that the fierce studiousness of these years had been entered upon, not only to promote forgetfulness of Rosina Wheeler, but by way of solace for having been tricked out of a parliamentary seat in the way already mentioned. All this time, however, even in the thick of his incessant reading of books, meditating and commenting on their writers, he kept his eye fixed on St. Stephens, and regulated his studies with that goal in view. From a child Bulwer-Lytton had lived among professional politicians; the House of Commons came as naturally into his course as school or college. While an Ealing private pupil he had been well drilled in the oratorical rudiments; he had employed the knowledge thus acquired with great success at the Cambridge Union. He had, therefore, from early youth, been taught to debate as well as to speak. Since then he had given nights, days, unbroken weeks, and even years, to acquiring every sort of knowledge that could prepare the path from Parliament to office. When, therefore, he finally returned to England, in 1826, it was not only to make Rosina Wheeler his wife, but actively to enter upon a two-fold career—literary and political. The pen of the novel writer, essayist, critic, and pamphleteer was first to win him fame and power. Thus, not the accident of fortune or birth, but ability, finding its public expression in achievement, should entitle him to a voice in ruling the State.

CHAPTER VI

THE NOVELIST ESTABLISHED

Falkland published—Its relations to other works of a like class by English and foreign writers—Specially compared with *Vivian Grey* and other of Disraeli's books—Enthusiastic reception in Germany—Less cordially welcomed by English critics and readers—What the author's mother feared and said about *Falkland*—The book and its personages as they were—Bulwer on his defence at the time, and on the moral character of imaginative works in *Caxtoniana* long after—In *Falkland* little of Byron and much of Goethe—Generally Bulwer's Byronism on the wane—More bent than ever on marrying Rosina Wheeler—Early efforts at poetry in the style of Pope—Mrs. Lytton's objections to marriage with Miss Wheeler, and suspicions about her age removed by searching register of birth—Bulwer's grand scale of living and talking combined with practical economy, and capacity of wise counsel for the management of money—Marriage, life at Woodcot, meditations on future work—*Pelham* at once successful, chiefly because of its personalities—Key to characters—General reception at home and abroad.

SKETCHES of academic characters and humours had appeared from Edward Bulwer's pen in local magazines, while he was still keeping his undergraduate terms at Cambridge. These were in the nature of undesigned rehearsals for the course of literary production, beginning in 1827. They were not, however, the only attempts at original composition made by him, before taking his degree. The manuscripts of both his earliest novels had been carried so far as easily to ensure their completion during the two seasons of studious seclusion at Versailles. When, therefore, he re-established himself in London, he brought with him *Falkland* and *Pelham*, both nearly ready for the printer. The latter of these grew out of a literary germ which never reached the printing stage. This manuscript, provisionally entitled *Mortimer*, had done duty as a sort of commonplace book before reduction to novel shape. *Mortimer's* transformation into *Pelham* had not, however, begun when,

in 1826, the finishing strokes were given to *Falkland*, and the book itself was published in the marriage year, 1827. The general condition of European thought and letters at the time of *Falkland's* appearance may be very briefly described.

The close of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth century coincided with the appearance of famous books, expressing in their various ways the two emotions of love and religion that dominated the generation then rising. In France, Rousseau had written *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. In Germany, one literary epoch was marked by Goethe's *Werther* and *Wilhelm Meister*, another by his disciple Schiller's *The Robbers*. Among English authors Benjamin Disraeli was steeping himself in the influences, and engaged in the meditations, that on the eve of the Victorian era were to embody themselves in *Contarini Fleming*. The gusts of intellectual and spiritual unrest then agitating Europe at the same time so affected J. A. Froude, the future historian, still a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, as, in 1848, to inspire him with a record of those disturbing influences—*The Nemesis of Faith*. A kind of spiritual Byronism was, in fact, now prompting English youth to parade, not so much the desolations of the heart as the ruins of a religion. All the convulsions of the inner life then most in vogue conspired to attack the central figure, lovelorn and godless, of Bulwer's earliest novel. Great writers who begin young generally find reason to repent of their virgin ventures. *Vivian Grey* was written when its author was only two years younger than Bulwer, when he opened the list of his prose tales. Disraeli's remarks on *Vivian* consequently bear an application to *Falkland*: "Books written by boys, pretending to give a picture of manners, and to deal in knowledge of human nature, must be founded on affectation; they are the results of imagination acting upon a knowledge which does not come from

experience. Hence, too, exaggeration, false taste, and the total want of art incidental to maiden efforts. When," Disraeli adds, "the writers of such books are not again heard of, the works, if ever noticed, are soon forgotten, and no great harm is done. If the authors subsequently become eminent, and their writings are in demand from causes irrespective of their merit, such productions should be exempt from criticism, and be looked upon as a kind of literary *lusus*." Even before his arrival at full literary maturity, Bulwer could be quite as impartial and sound a self-critic as Disraeli, and the first to admit the unwholesome atmosphere, the stilted style, and the inexperience of life, disfiguring *Falkland*. During his youth, indeed, elsewhere than at Ealing, Bulwer may have been in and out of love often enough. But erotic conditions depicted in *Falkland* seldom become a matter of personal knowledge to a lad in his teens. The precocity of *Falkland*, written between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, was merely a development of the interrogating infancy which had asked metaphysical riddles of its mamma. So, to revert to Disraeli, there are in *Vivian Grey* many of exactly those things to have been expected from a brilliant youth "born in a library," where musings on Iamblichus and the later Platonists were sometimes disturbed by echoes of unusually authentic extracts from the scandalous chronicle, social or political, of the time. *Falkland*, indeed, contains nothing so rich in promise as *Vivian Grey*'s Marquis of Carabas, or the recipe for making tomahawk punch. Moreover, Disraeli's first novel abounded in the strong touches, the irony, the sarcasm, and the telling personalities, which were the special notes of his genius and the first causes of his success. These qualities, possessed in nothing like the same degree by Bulwer, made the book by a solicitor's clerk of twenty the literary hit of the season. *Falkland*, though receiving the compliment of much conventional censure, presaged

none of the enthusiasm that awaited *Pelham*. Warmly appreciated by some foreign critics, it never became a popular success at home. It lacked the flavour of *Vivian Grey*'s wit, and displayed few signs of the wisdom and humour whose combination is one of Bulwer's own distinctive merits. The second John Murray of the Albemarle Street dynasty noted the creator of *Vivian* as a young man to be kept in sight. *Falkland* was the occasion of no such compliment from him whom Byron called the Napoleon of publishers.

Bulwer, it has already been seen, placed Richardson above Fielding and Smollett. In *Falkland*, he adopted from *Clarissa Harlowe* the interspersions of narrative with diaries and letters. With Bulwer in *Falkland*, as with Disraeli in *Vivian Grey*, Byron still justifies Heine's description of him as the greatest elemental force of the nineteenth century. The sentimentality, however, of *Falkland* is less that of Byron than of Goethe. Falkland himself, indeed, is no more a reflection of Werther than of Lovelace. In French hands, Falkland would have been a cynic of the boulevards, in German and Italian a mere sentimentalist, compact of passion, without any admixture of philosophy. The object of *Falkland* is not more to depict the progress of an unlawful affection than to show that the whole tragedy of the *amour* grew out of an abnormally developed egotism. The book must be taken for what it was intended to be—a study in psychological disease, never desirable reading for the young person, but to-day comparatively harmless, even in its most strongly written and highly coloured passages, because of its antiquated phraseology and the tediousness of its details. Falkland himself is a contradiction of all those qualities with some of which Bulwer never fails to endow his real heroes. Lady Mary's lover nowhere figures as less of a scamp because he apes the philosopher, nor of a knave because he dubs himself a

knight. He is, in fact, a Prussianized Joseph Surface, substituting long-winded agnostic soliloquy for the fine sentiments of Sheridan's day. The English critics were long silent; the Germans, seeing its obligations to Goethe, took in *Falkland* an almost patriotic pride. How infinitely superior this English artist to a French, who certainly would have made the heroine a mere coquette; even a compatriot of Goethe, if less faithfully his disciple than the Englishman, would have drawn Lady Mary as no better than a silly provincial school-girl. Bulwer's genius, saturated with all that was best in Wertherism, alone could have done justice to her exquisite womanliness. "Here," exclaimed another Teutonic enthusiast, "is a work proving its author to be unrivalled even amongst his countrymen." In a word, the Germans acclaimed Bulwer not only the most artistic romance-writer living, but a psychologist as original as he was profound.

Berlin magazines published articles that grew into treatises, expatiating on the consummate skill with which the genius who created *Falkland* had, from a simple plot and most ordinary incidents, obtained results which no abundance of varied material would have enabled any other European writer to secure. All this, of course, meant that *Falkland* had in it more than German reviewers could have hoped to find of what Byron called "the sort of thing to turn a young man's head, or make a Werther of him in the end."* It nauseated Thackeray, moving him to write his clever verses, *The Sorrows of Werther*. As the complimentary chorus began, so, without break, in strophe and antistrophe, it continued,—its burden being that the inherent interest of the subject was as wide and deep as humanity itself, and that its treatment by a succession of light and delicate touches had produced an effect which no other European genius could hope to rival.

* *Don Juan*, xiv. 64.

With the extravagant adulation of the Fatherland were mingled, however, American as well as English estimates more rational and less fulsome. The United States press had never hoped for anything good from a story whose greater part is told by letters and diaries. Therefore it felt no disappointment at the mischievous nonsense now given to it. The London reviewers generally agreed that the book was unentertaining, sickeningly monotonous, and downright dull, nor uninteresting and uninformative only, but morally and socially pernicious into the bargain. Even maternal pride in her son's nascent reputation did not prevent Mrs. Lytton from recording a long and earnest protest against *Falkland's* tone and tendency. She was, indeed, careful to gild the pill. Startling in the insight of its whole conception, so fine in the delicate finish of all its details, as to be to other works of its kind what an artist's *chef d'œuvre* is to a signboard daub ;—a book, in short, compared with which all other latter-day novels seemed coarse, clumsy, and untrue to nature ; amazing power of writing shown in every line ;—such were the beauties allowed and proclaimed for the book by this competent and high-minded judge, whose admiration for the literary charms of *Falkland* was largely tempered by grief and disappointment at its immoral and irreligious conclusion.

Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton knew that her son believed at heart the Christian revelation. She had therefore hoped to see in him a champion of the only true faith. "You have," she protested, "no right to interest us so powerfully in the feelings and fate of a man who is selfish vanity incarnate, whose attachments do no good to himself, much harm to others, and who cares not by what road he reaches annihilation. This," she added, "may make your readers suspect that you yourself have no belief in a state after death which bears any relation to the conduct of life. You, who have a future full of purpose and a soul full of power, can only

wrong yourself and others by writing like this. Oh, that you, so rarely gifted, would set forth with the pen your conviction that it is best to love and obey, without the excessive speculation on the why and the wherefore which only puzzles and confuses the mind." Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton would have been satisfied if her son had altered, according to her views, the last pages of the novel, and had shown to his readers his conscience-stricken hero on a penitent death-bed. To this suggestion, Bulwer's reply might appropriately have been: "*Falkland* is a tragedy of unlawful love; poetical justice is satisfied by the terrible retribution which overtakes the criminal weakness as surely as the Greek Nemesis which dogs and at last seizes the proud and impious transgressor." *Falkland* on a Christian convert's death-bed would not only weaken the moral, but be an odious offence against good taste and literary art. Neither then nor thereafter did Bulwer follow Byron's example in *English Bards* of dealing directly with his English reviewers. As a fact, in *Falkland* Bulwer emphasizes the heinousness of the sin less severely discountenanced in all ages by polite society than by the Decalogue. In opposition to this conventional view, *Falkland* finally and unconditionally teaches that the way of transgressors is hard, and that hard it ought to be. As if anticipating among his readers apologists for the heroine's fall, the author, speaking in his own person, leaves no doubt concerning his opinion of her conduct. Say not, he in effect tells us, that all allowances are to be made for a highly susceptible, delicately nurtured wife, who finds no companion in a preoccupied husband, and who, in her desolation, is yielding to the despair against which she has long fought, when she is encountered by an appreciative and irresistibly fascinating lover, the fulfilment in flesh and blood of the ideal whom, and whom alone, she has always loved. True, the author admits, the temptation was terrible; it is, however, he seems to add, the one

peril to which a woman in Lady Mary's station is exposed. It ought not, therefore, he concludes, to have proved overpowering. The mere fact of being highly bred and exquisitely refined makes her guilt not the less, but the more unpardonable. To have laboured this argument in his text would have marred the artistic effect of his work. For the rest, Bulwer elsewhere has exposed the absurdity of pretending that the moral character of a book is decided by its declared object, and not by its general literary manner and tone. That, in fact, forms the text of an essay on the moral effect of writers, written by Bulwer many years later, but bearing so directly on the ethics of *Falkland* as to call for some special mention of it now. The remarks will be found in No. XI of the *causeries* collected in the volume *Caxtoniana*.^{*} That essay bears directly on the distinction between a book's moral *object* and its moral *tendency*. The remarks now to be noticed in the *Caxtoniana* series were published, though not necessarily written, in the sixties. Some years earlier, Bulwer had touched the same subject at a different point in the preface to the second edition of *Lucretia*. The Bulwerian discourse now referred to starts from the principle that all true art, whether of the pen or pencil, is ethical,—one of the chief conclusions reached is that the purifying influences of time remove from works of art whatever may be mischievous, and leave only the good. Nor can any writer, whatever his moral purpose, and however great his artistic genius, foresee what, in the course of ages, may be the ethical effect of his performance.

First among the illustrations given comes *Gulliver's Travels*. Here the satirical design would certainly not be commended by philanthropists to the approval of youth. Swift seeks to mock away all by which man's original nature is refined, softened, exalted, and adorned; he directs the

^{*} "Knebworth" edition, p. 112.

edge of his ridicule at the very roots of those interests and motives, by which society has called cities from the quarry and gardens from the wild. The author closes all his assaults upon the framework of civilized communities with the most ruthless libel upon man himself that ever gave the venom of hate to the stings of wit. Yet the book itself exercises no immoral, no misanthropical influence ; we place it without scruple in the hands of our children : the lampoon upon humanity is the favourite tale of the nursery. Who could say he was ever the worse for all that could make him scorn and detest his species, in the " Voyage to Laputa," or the description of the Yahoos ? Rather what great discoveries even in practical science may not have their first germ in the stimulus given to a child's imaginative ideas by a book whose genius has made fiction truth-like and the marvellous natural ?

Both Johnson's *Rasselas* and Voltaire's *Candide* were written with a moral object so much alike that Voltaire said if *Candide* had not come out before *Rasselas* appeared, he would have been accused of plagiarizing Johnson. Yet *Rasselas* has been an almost religious textbook for generations ; Voltaire's warmest admirers have never extolled the morality of *Candide*. So, too, with Lucretius ; his great poem expounds the creed of an atheist ; it also abounds with ideas that enrich the intellect and exalt the thoughts. No one, therefore, ever became an atheist from reading it ; on the other hand, its sublimest descriptions of almighty power sometimes occur in the argument against Divine omnipotence. The poem, therefore, refutes its philosophical purpose. It would resolve the artistic design of Creation into a fortuitous concurrence of atoms ; but by a like fortuitous concurrence could those harmonious lines have been strung together ? If, therefore, a poem cannot be written without a poet, how can the universe be created without a Creator ?

To return to Voltaire; he, in the judgment of most sober Englishmen, did the most mischief and in the most wanton spirit by writings whose genius no one disputes. To-day, however, all the works which most scandalized his time are obsolete and unread. The lavishness of its wit has not preserved *La Poucelle* from falling into contempt, nor sapped one foundation in Christian faith. Of Voltaire to-day there only remain popular and current school histories, like those of Charles XII and Peter the Great, instructive studies of social history like *L'Esprit des Mœurs*, decorous tragedies whose art in construction is recommended by critics to the study of genius, and which abound in ethical maxims, as well as in a general authority against bigotry, persecution, fanaticism, oppression and arbitrary law. More than this, Voltaire introduced a knowledge of Newton's *Principia* to France; by so doing he started *La Place* on his own discoveries. Again, who but Voltaire demolished the atheism of Diderot, and in doing so defended those two truths which are the columns of every temple—the existence of the Deity and the immortality of the soul? This notion of evil as so transitory in its essence that it scarcely has a real existence, occurs in scholastic theology, and is dwelt on at some length by J. B. Mozley in his book about St. Augustine and Predestination. That controversy had been studied by Bulwer; his researches into it may have given him the idea developed in *Caxtoniana*. The same thought was also with Robert Browning, e.g. the lines:—

There shall never be one lost good !
 What was shall live as before.
 The evil is null, is nought,
 Is silence implying sound ;
 What was good shall be good, with,
 For evil, so much good more.

This is not all. Even in a great writer's fallacies there may be real good, for these often serve the advancement of truth, not the less effectually because indirectly, by stimu-

lating the energies of the writers who oppose those fallacies, and who, in so doing, strike out new ideas and suggest fresh discoveries. Thus Sir Isaac Newton's researches into alchemy warmed and emboldened his reason. So, too, Sir William Hamilton is guilty of no exaggeration when he says that David Hume gave a new impulse and direction to all European philosophy, and that to Hume must be referred every subsequent advance made in intellectual enquiry. That was not less because Hume stimulated opponents than aroused partisans. Or to put it rather differently. Without Hume there would have been no Kant,—consequently, none of the German philosophy which Kant originated. Reid, moreover, is the product of Hume. Thus arose the philosophy of the Scottish school. That school ultimately provided the corrective to Hume's own materialism. In France, as Bulwer points out, Hume's disciple Condillac, four years the Scotch thinker's junior, had based all the impressions and faculties of the mind on the senses. That started and ensured the triumph of the French intellectual reaction. Maine de Biran, Royer-Collard and Victor Cousin, combined their protests from different points of view against Condillac into an opposite system. They thus founded a school which in less than a century formed an effective barrier to the propagation of the materialism deriving itself from Hume as its fountain-head. Bulwer's show of justifying *Falkland* on philosophical grounds could of course be only half serious. It was, indeed, an afterthought. Written when his first novel had long ceased to be a subject of controversy, the essay now examined gave him the opportunity of showing the careful study he had once made of modern European thought, and presenting in an agreeable form the facts he had laboured conscientiously to master. Nor would any one have been quicker than Bulwer himself to have exposed, had it suited him, the logical absurdity to which such reasoning must lead; for if the truest service to thought and

letters is rendered by the writing most certain to breed disgust and therefore reaction, the greater the violence done by any particular book to the proprieties, the stronger in the long run will be its author's claim to be considered a benefactor to his kind.

The truth is that Bulwer's critical faculty kept pace in its development with the strengthening of his imagination, and the wealth of his productive power. The real objection to *Falkland*, and the cause of whatever can make its reading mischievous, were ignored by the author of the novel at the time, but were admitted, were even specified, by himself some ten years later. In 1827 he had claimed credit for *Falkland* as having a far wider and a far higher purpose than the trite illustration of any moral maxim. This design was to increase the knowledge of our nature by displaying the passions and workings of the heart. As well, he adds, forbid a doctor to explore what is defective in the formation of the body, as tell the literary student of character not to describe what is vicious in the constitution of the mind. In 1837 Bulwer contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* a criticism still readable of Paul de Kock's novels. This article contains the answer to many of its author's own arguments in defence of *Falkland*; it therefore has its place in the history of Bulwer's first novel. The effects of the passions on individuals, and of social circumstances on character, are described by the *Edinburgh* reviewer as the novelist's legitimate business. Yet there may be much danger in the attempt to amend either individuals or society. Thus a fiction like *Tom Jones*, while it unmasks hypocrisy, may invest with a perilous fascination the errors of a frank and cordial nature. Hence the danger of Fielding's masterpiece to young readers, who are rarely Blifils and frequently Joneses. Physical anatomy, observes Bulwer in the *Edinburgh* article, as if to controvert the plea urged by him on his own behalf when he was still in the twenties, is a most

useful science ; there have, however, been writers who have made anatomy subservient to the grossest impurities. There is a mental anatomy as well as a physical one, by which we may render intellectual instruction a pander to the passions. To be moral is ever to be philosophical, but to be philosophical is not always to be moral. Eventually, as is well known, Bulwer confessed the censures of *Falkland* to have been just, by suppressing the novel. Its general publication, indeed, was suspended till after his own death. The motives weighing with the author in the book's withdrawal were such as might be expected in a man suddenly but sincerely touched with a sense of responsibility to the public he addressed. The actuating considerations were those, not merely of the writer but the politician.

This is not the place in which to analyse or follow Bulwer's industrious and interesting investigations of French social and political progress from the end of the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century. He had seen the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy ; he had mingled in the everyday life of Paris on its restoration. He had watched with the deepest interest some of the incidents that marked the supremacy of the French middle classes under an Orleanist king. He wished this *régime* well ; he also believed in the support that the Crown may receive from the pen. Nothing, however, could seem less likely to strengthen the monarchy of the *bourgeoisie* than the temper of the imaginative writers whose works then formed a brilliant epoch in the nation's intellectual life. Any remarks about *Paul Clifford* here would be to anticipate events and dates. But the French novelist of the Orleanist era was fond of representing the criminal as the creation of the evil institutions in which he lived. Similarly the priest of popular fiction was often an impostor, the noble a swindler, the merchant a thief. Property, religion and law had in fact corrupted a generation and a country. If society were

to be purified, it must be by the saving influence of the working-man. Thus far Bulwer's sympathies were entirely with the friends of political progress and the pioneers of parliamentary reform. To confirm and strengthen the upper middle classes in their preponderance, to ennoble and elevate their thoughts in accordance with their new responsibilities ;—such were the ends to which Bulwer had given much thought, and towards which literature was a legitimate, as it might prove a powerful agency. But then there must be as few as possible of those French novels in which public feeling is systematically enlisted on the side of sin ; faithless wives ought not generally to be invested with the glamour of suffering angels, the paramour who has wrecked a home should not be identified with the knightly champion, above fear and reproach, of the woman he has led astray. The chivalrous instincts of the reader should not be monopolized by professional offenders against the laws of property and person.

Bulwer now reflected whether he had not himself offended with his pen against some of these principles. He soon found that he had. The one act of reparation possible was to unwrite what he had written. The result came in the suppression of *Falkland*. So far the Anglo-Saxon reviewers on either side of the Atlantic had said little about *Falkland*. Not, however, that the book, as some have represented, remained without important readers till its author's political appearances had made him a public character. Among British residents in Paris during the 1830 revolution was Lady Blessington, even then, though not to the same extent that she later became, in some sort an arbitress of literary taste. "During the very heat of the July outbreaks, when balls continually struck against the walls of my dwelling, I forgot all danger while reading *Falkland*." So, some years later, wrote and said to Bulwer the mistress of Gore House, Kensington. Nor, though under the circumstances

already related so far as might be he cancelled the book, did *Falkland* cease to be something of a favourite with its author. Writing from Knebworth, where he was staying with his mother, or from London, to his old Paris friend Mrs. Cunningham, in the early summer of 1826, he divides his industry into two kinds,—his reading, with copious note-taking, for future essays and speeches, upon universal history and the Corn Laws, solely for his own advantage,—his writings, intended for the advantage of the world, consisting of three light prose works. One of these, he says, is a sort of *Werther* taken from fact, and with it he confesses to being tolerably pleased. The other two are satirical; one of them, of course, was *Pelham*, the third may have been some manuscript never printed, or at least published, such as the already-mentioned *Glenallan*, or a story called *Greville*. At any rate of the satirical efforts Bulwer did not think highly; though the actual success of *Pelham* was due, not so much to its being a novel of fashion as a personal satire of society. Continuing this vein of discontent, he writes to the same correspondent: "My health is wonderfully improved, but I was never so completely broken and disappointed in mind."

With the practical consequences of his first novel to the professional authorship on which he was now entering, he had no reason to be dissatisfied. Apart from any payments on account of *Falkland*, its publisher, Colburn (the fashionable fiction house of the time), offered Bulwer five hundred pounds for another romance of the same length. The day was, indeed, still distant when, in a House of Commons speech, the great Sir Robert Peel was heard by the late Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff to describe Sir Edward Lytton and Mr. Disraeli as the two fashionable novelists of the day. Still, by the later twenties, Edward Bulwer was in the front rank of the literary celebrities of the time. The Athenæum Club had been founded in 1824; two years later

Bulwer was among its best-known and most regular frequenters. From it was dated in 1826 most of his correspondence. These letters, chiefly to Mrs. Cunningham, sometimes contained notes, more or less amusing and personal, of the London season towards the close of the Georgian epoch. From his chair in the club window Bulwer could see enough of the Pall Mall panorama to yield him material for the satirical sketches he was then meditating. True, he was so wretched as scarcely to know what he was writing. Still, it was idle to complain. Town to him was what it had always been ; people in good society found it full, and called it gay. The second set said it was dull. Bulwer found it all music, dancing, and *ennui*. The above-mentioned window yielded him, however, some entertainment. Looking out of it he saw "Bobus" Smith or "Poodle" Byng walking up and down, all curve and complacency, as fat and foolish as ever. Turning his chair round, and surveying the room in which it stood, he let his eyes rest on W—— ; "I asked him," says Bulwer, "about Lady A—— ; the poor little man was quite frightened." All this sounds like the echo of Byron's memoranda. Meanwhile, in *Falkland*, Bulwer had, in his own phrase, done what Goethe had accomplished in *Wilhelm Meister* ; he had, that is, rid his bosom of the perilous stuff that oppressed it.

At the same time he had parted with all conscious Byronic affectations. His new motto consisted of Macbeth's words :

. Blow wind, come wrack,
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

In plain prose, as he declared, this meant that from experience Bulwer had found in fortitude the best remedy for the evils of life. He had, in his own words, outlived the ordinary springs of fear and selfishness which influenced most men's opinions. He had found his heart hardening with years and with the petrifying customs of the world ; he had therefore made a vow : "whenever any feeling wholly selfish comes upon

me," he said, "I will root it out and destroy it immediately. From this resolution no sophistry shall deter, no blinding self-partiality shall delude." Bulwer had not long to await scope for putting this resolution to the test. While he had been abroad, an unnamed acquaintance had used his letters and introductions to secure the parliamentary seat at Hertford, designed by Bulwer for himself. Well, the new-made philosopher, great as was his disappointment, put it all down to want of thought, and not to any treacherous intention. "My dear little man," writes to him with almost maternal pleasantry Mrs. Cunningham, "don't so bitterly regret your disappointment about Parliament. It's not yet time for you to become a statesman. Even if you wait some time for the next vacancy, you will only then have arrived at the years of juvenile discretion." The despondency, however, suffered by Bulwer at this time had less to do with letters or politics than with love. The disquieting emotion was indeed, he insisted, a nobler and a tenderer sentiment than any which the much-abused monosyllable is generally used to denote. In simple truth, his heart was the theatre of a conflict of duties. He had gone abroad, or tried constant change of scene at home, with the real purpose of forgetting Rosina Wheeler. He now found himself in London again, more passionately enamoured of her than ever.

She had no doubt wished him back, she was proud of her conquest, the more so because friends of hers in France had begun to congratulate her on it, and to embellish their felicitations with glowing accounts of the brilliant figure cut by her lover in Paris society. But she had not pursued him with correspondence while he was away; there seems little to justify the insinuation of his family that she had placed much pressure upon him to return. Once back in London, he met her for the most part in crowded drawing-rooms; there were, at least, few of those private inter-

views conventionally permissible and appropriate to a young man and his intended. He could still describe himself to Mrs. Cunningham as a free man, adding that he now so little deserved the Childe Harold nickname as for ever to have done with that form of folly, and in fact to be planning a satire against gloomy people and the Byronic mania.

Raw youths with pale faces and raven black hair,
Who make frowns in the glass and write odes to despair.

This specimen couplet shows as clearly as a much longer extract could have done the probable style and substance of the whole composition, had it been completed. The lines also indicate that, twenty years before his first great poetic success, *The New Timon*, he was trying to master the rhyme and rhythm of Dryden and Pope, eventually reproduced with the felicity and force reached in *St. Stephens* in 1860.

The boast of his continued freedom from any actual marriage engagement had been made to Mrs. Cunningham in anything but a triumphant tone. During the earlier summer of 1826 his time was nominally divided between his mother at Knebworth, and in London the *soirées* of the *savants* or of the learned and literary ladies. "O," he exclaims, "the curious notes I get from these people!" Their affectation, their hunting-out of fine phrases, and their aversion to the common language of ordinary mortals, are all ridiculed in turn,—not, as some one unkindly remarked, before their associations and peculiarities of phrase had exercised some influence over the earlier prose diction of Bulwer himself. These coteries were well known to Miss Wheeler; her chief literary friend in them was the poetess, "L. E. L.," of whom Bulwer had already more than once spoken so warmly. If, he again writes to a French friend, "Miss Landon's poems are not yet imported into Paris, get them forthwith. They contain more power,

pathos and music than most things now written. She is only eighteen, and as charming and unaffected as she is clever." It was not, as has been said, Miss Landon, still less Miss Wheeler herself, but a "blue" of a more official order who at this time asked Bulwer to write something in her album. He yielded to the importunity, and took the pen :

Fools write here to show their wit,
And men of sense to laugh at it.

"The Blue," is his comment, "looked exceedingly black."

The combined frivolity and pretentiousness of the society in which Edward Bulwer and Rosina Wheeler now most frequently saw each other, stimulated the young man's faculties of banter, and caused them both to exchange many a laugh about the company in which they found themselves. There is nothing to show why any betrothal should not still have been indefinitely delayed, or finally averted. There are even signs of her son's disposition to approach towards his mother's views of the proposed match. It was not only Miss Wheeler's family antecedents and social training to which Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton felt so strong an objection. That free-thinkers, even downright infidels, socialists, and revolutionaries, should have been at home in the French *salon* of Rosina's mother Mrs. Wheeler, was indeed of terribly evil augury for her domestic future. Such a wife, if she did not impart her own social and spiritual heterodoxy to Edward Bulwer, would, as was the more probable alternative, excite in her future husband a disgust of the heresies whose taint had poisoned her childhood. Could there be a surer cause of home unhappiness than conjugal differences about faith? Moreover Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton believed her son unconsciously to exaggerate the strength and depth of his attachment to a young lady he had but casually met at a London tea-table. At least he knew little yet of the great world to which

his station, his gifts and his prospects gave him the right of a brilliant entrance.

Yet, so late as the July of 1827, Edward Bulwer could assure his mother of there being no entanglement with Miss Wheeler, and of his only tie to her being the strength of his affection and the truth of his esteem. "This tie," he added, "could only be undone by her unworthiness, and that would be my worst affliction. Finally," was his solemn declaration, "my love for Rosina is not of the blind sort you suppose. I see all her faults, such as they are, but I love her mind a thousand times more than her person." As for merely flirting with her, he had from the first moment of their meeting loved her too well to do anything of the kind. Her bringing-up, he admitted, had been a most unhappy one, but it had not deprived her of a mind and heart to put anything like coquetry out of the question. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton, however, insisted on straining the maternal prerogative of authority and love to the breaking-point, and the details of her conduct were admirably calculated to ensure the failure of her plan. She had in vain tried invincibly to prejudice her son against an Irish bride of little or no fortune, and of, to say the least, not altogether desirable family connections. She now changed her note. At least, if her son were bent upon throwing himself away, and securing misery and shame for his future portion, he would not choose a woman, not indeed exactly old enough to be his mother, but at least so undoubted in advance of his own age. He at once answered that he would not. If Miss Wheeler's years were so much more than his own, as Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton had alleged, though his heart should bleed to death in the operation he would cut the link that held them together. Edward Bulwer lost no time in showing that he was likely, if need be, to be as good as his word. He took the initiative in the invidious duty of placing Rosina's age beyond doubt. A

letter from her guardian explained the origin of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's false impression on the subject. It was Rosina Wheeler's sister, not Rosina herself, who entered the world in the September of 1800. The youngest child of Massy and Mrs. Wheeler was born November 4, 1802, and that child's name was Rosina. Edward Bulwer had already quoted to his mother the Fathers and philosophers in his contention that an adult son owed not less allegiance to his own heart than to his parents. Mrs. Bulwer had retorted on him his favourite Shakespeare's warning against a husband being his wife's junior.* That appeal was disposed of by the latest official discoveries. Not content with the dates and facts which Rosina's guardian supplied, Mrs. Bulwer had sent out her own agent to investigate the registry books in Ireland. Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's final condition, formally accepted by her son, had been that a demonstrated difference of two years on the wrong side between the two young people, should bring everything to an end. Some disparity, indeed, existed. Born November 4, 1802, Rosina Wheeler was by just six months the senior of Edward Bulwer, whose birthday had been May 25, 1803. The young man might therefore, addressing his mother, well say, "On this subject there can be no further discussion," adding, with some point and in characteristic phrase, "The honour I speak of as binding me to Miss Wheeler is not what you suppose. There are two sorts of honour. One regulates our conduct to the world, the other to individuals and to

* *Twelfth Night*, Act II., Scene 4.

Duke Orsino.

. . . Let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart:
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are.

Viola.

I think it well, my lord.

Orsino.

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent.

ourselves. The first is honour commonly so called. The second is conscience. The first bids us deserve the good opinion of others. The second forbids us to forfeit our own." Judiciously summing up the whole argument, he remarks, "A man is either the slave of passion or the servant of duty. In this matter Heaven knows I am not passion's slave. Grant all you say,—that I exaggerate Miss Wheeler's affection for me, that she will not break her heart if I leave her, and that I also exaggerate any possible injury to her position from the rupture of our long intercourse; about this a young lady of irreproachable conduct cannot be permanently injured by the breaking of an engagement which leaves her more or less heart-free. But I think that no honourable, high-minded gentleman is justified in breaking such an engagement, except on the discovery that the young lady's heart is not in it, that her character is so unworthy or his disposition so uncongenial as to destroy all prospect of a union founded on mutual love and esteem. But in my case these feelings have only been confirmed by the engagement to Miss Wheeler. Were I now to forfeit her esteem and love for the sake of any worldly advantage, that advantage could never render tolerable to me my own estimate of myself. But enough of this. All you say only makes me more wretched, without moving me one iota from the sole path which I can tread with self-respect. Go to town if you wish it. See Miss Wheeler if you please. If the ties between us are to be broken, she is the only human being by whom it can be done." The practical sequel of this correspondence was the marriage, August 30, 1827, at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, by the Hon. and Rev. W. Bentinck, of Edward Lytton Bulwer, son of the late General Bulwer of Heydon Hall, Norfolk, and of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton of Knebworth Park, Herts, to Rosina Doyle Wheeler of Lizard Connel in the county of Limerick, only surviving daughter of the late Francis Massy Wheeler. "The bride,"

added the *Morning Post*, "who is remarkably beautiful, was given away by her uncle, General Sir John Doyle, Bart., and the happy pair, after a cold collation at General Doyle's house in Montagu Square, set off for their seat, Woodcot House, in Oxfordshire."

Three years of retirement at this country home, occupied with writing which might yield something like fame, as well as enough to make both ends meet ; then three years of foreign travel, with more taking-in and giving-out of literary treasure ; after this a parliamentary career, begun on the strength of a literary reputation established, and a mind well stocked with what had been said or thought about the science of politics and the art of government by the wisest of men at all ages. Such was the programme laid down by Bulwer himself when he began his married life. The rural surroundings, rather than the building itself, of Woodcot House, provided the scenery for this novel *What Will He Do With It ?* His new home was one of those roomy, unpretentious, thoroughly comfortable and convenient mansions that still abound in that part of southern England where the counties of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and even Hampshire seem to overlap each other. Next to the abodes themselves, the chief features in this landscape are the dense beechwoods, and the chalk cliffs of old quarries rising perpendicularly out of them. Woodcot House itself, now or till recently occupied by a pupil-taking clergyman, displays a broad white frontage divided by an old-fashioned porch, with a long array of many-paned windows on either side, such as to-day is perhaps more often to be seen near Newbury than in the immediate neighbourhood of Reading, Bulwer's post-town. Backed by thick copses of stunted growth, and commanding beech clumps, the house opens upon an irregular and undulating flower garden, gradually losing itself in a wide prospect of what may be called park-land,

but is rather a blend of pasture and sylvan down. The few acres of different kinds attached to this dwelling were valuable enough, it was reckoned, to pay for the cost of the establishment.

The money responsibilities he had accepted were, however, upon the most sanguine calculation, in excess of his resources. In 1827, at the time of his marriage, his entire patrimony, if afterwards increased by a Chancery decision, amounted to not much more than £200 a year. His wife had an annual income of less than £100. The practically unlimited allowance hitherto received from his mother ceased ; not, it may be, that Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton actually stopped it, but that, shrewdly anticipating such a contingency, her son consulted his own and his wife's pride by voluntarily resigning it. Marriage, he boasted, instead of diminishing or embarrassing, had already increased his income. With a taste for striking social effects, Bulwer may have hitherto planned his Paris or London expenditure on the grand scale. His nature, however, was careful and even frugal. "A sovereign saved is a sovereign gained," was his motto through life. He never bought anything that could not have been described as a necessity. He gratified an instinct rather than curbed an inclination in practising the pettiest economies. No man in his position ever made such good bargains with West-End tradesmen. The pomp and circumstance of private luxury were always cultivated by him when they promised a definite return, but to mere costly self-indulgence without an object he was always a stranger. The management of money, he often said, is as much of an art as the writing of a novel, or the putting of a play upon the stage. Every artist improves himself when he improves the qualities which his art demands. The management of money is practically the management of self.

The first rule laid down by Bulwer in his essay on this

subject consists of three words—horror of debt.* Without liberty, human dignity and happiness are impossible. The free man perishes when he begins to view without anguish and shame his lapse into the bondage of the debtor. For the intellectual worker especially, independence was the essential condition. That meant the right of genius to follow its bent, without fear of bailiff and dun. Lay by something every year, if it be but a shilling; without obeying that counsel, depend upon it there can be no success in life, because nothing of the self-respect which success implies. This advice is supplemented by many shrewd variations upon Solomon's warning against suretyship, with illustrations drawn from contemporary experience, showing that to back a friend's bill as a mere matter of form means the first step of Damon or Pythias on the road to ruin.

These precepts were not formulated in print till some years after the date now reached. To go back to 1827, the publisher Colburn's satisfaction with *Falkland* in the present, and sanguine belief in its promise for the future, prevented Bulwer from being seriously discouraged by the "prudes and canters" who had made a dead set against *Falkland*, or by the wounds his self-love received from the present indifference of the great quarterlies and monthlies to himself and his work. From his first serious start in letters, Bulwer had made up his mind to elevate as well as entertain the generation for which he wrote. *Falkland*, as has been seen, had been placed by its author himself on the *index expurgatorius* of the libraries and the book-sellers,—not because he agreed with his censors, but because he perceived its highly coloured and powerfully written passages might with half-educated and emotional youth excite dangerous passions, or open up unhealthy tracts of thought. That result would not only be mischievous to

* *Caxtoniana*, VII, "The Management of Money."

the public he really wished to improve, but, by discrediting his own pen, would impair its future operations for good. The materialism and vulgarity of the age were steadily increasing with its wealth. The movement for the diffusion of useful knowledge during the late twenties and thirties, chiefly associated with Lord Brougham, Charles Knight, and William Tooke, engaged Bulwer's interest; at some points it enlisted his services also. The message for whose delivery he had prepared himself by the thought and labour of years was, however, chiefly to the unconsidered, though not strictly illiterate section, of the improvable lower middle class. With readers of this sort it is to his credit, as to theirs, that he always was, and still remains, a favourite; for instead of writing down to them, he bade them mount upward with him. He perplexed, mystified them, at times made their flesh creep, but always for the good of what was best in their humanity. *Pelham* gratified no unwholesome curiosity about the private life of fashionable people. From that story to his last effort in the Caxtonian vein—*Kenelm Chillingly*—his fictions not only by their plot and characters held the interest of two generations, but by their mellow shrewdness, condensed into pithy precepts, and their apt generalizations from a varied experience, have been, and still are, popular sources of practical guidance and help in daily life. That was the mission meditated and in many of its details matured during the years at Woodcot. Following in this respect Sir Walter Scott's example, he confined his creative work to a nominal three hours a day. How much these industrial limits were exceeded may be judged by the fact that within one period of ten years, before reaching middle age, he wrote twelve novels, two poems, the whole of *England and the English*, all that was ever done of *Athens*, one play, one political pamphlet, the great mass of the essays and tales brought together in *The Student*, as well as *Edinburgh* and *West-*

minster Review articles. In addition to these there were elaborate contributions to the *Monthly Chronicle*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, the *Examiner*, the *Literary Gazette*, and other periodicals. During more than half the fruitful decade now mentioned he was an active member of Parliament, seldom absent from his place during the session, nor ever failing to take a large share in the extra-parliamentary rhetoric of the recess. Yet the auspices attending the commencement of this various and incessant industry had not been favourable. With continued devotion to his bride there had begun occasionally to mingle a misgiving that, after all, his mother might be a better judge in such a matter than himself. If so, sooner or later the hour of disillusion would come. Moreover, the value of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton's opinion on his affairs had been recently much raised by her estimate of his first novel. Her sensibilities had, indeed, been offended by its heterodoxy in morals and faith; for its literary power and promise she had nothing but pride and praise. Her son had bowed to the maternal judgment by withdrawing the volume from general circulation. Mrs. Lytton's literary appreciation, with its wise mingling of praise and censure, stimulated and strengthened his industry and renewed his hopes as to its ultimate results.

Bulwer's temperament at five-and-twenty was apt to show itself as unprofitably and morbidly introspective as that of his own Falkland. The perverseness of nervous irritability was ever tormenting him with the maternal prophecy of wedded misery. And, beautiful as she was, could he feel sure he had found a perfectly suitable partner in Rosina Wheeler? Might it not even be that his mother's arguments against the match, if more skilfully and delicately put, would also have been his own? True, he might in the world's eyes have stood committed to Miss Wheeler; but would his sense of honour have driven him into marriage if his own taste and pride had not been mortally wounded

by the eager peremptoriness with which his mother had raked up disagreeable details about his sweetheart, and her search, both inartistic and unfeeling, into birth registers, to prove the young lady older than she actually was? Whatever foundation, during the early Woodcot days, there may have been for misgivings at his remembered neglect of the maternal monitions and appeals, Edward Bulwer on the whole could not have reproached himself with failure in his duty as a son. At the beginning of his course as a professional man of letters his spirits were depressed, his energies impaired, and his capacity for good work proportionately lessened, because the mother whom he loved for her affection and honoured for her wisdom continued to embitter his existence by a refusal to acknowledge his wife. Yet all this time Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton had been and was prepared to promote her son's welfare at the cost of her own convenience and comfort,—indeed of anything, except her pride and an ancestral prejudice which had become to her a sort of fetish worship, as the one security for the disciplined and decorous coherence of the individuals forming the domestic group. This was the Lytton tradition of the supreme jurisdiction belonging to the family over all its members. Rosina Wheeler had heard to her disgust of her relations with Edward Bulwer being discussed at the Knebworth councils of the Bulwer-Lytton clan. Supposing this body collectively to have recorded a hostile decision, and to have conveyed it to the recalcitrant youngest son, could it have had the slightest effect,—beyond, perhaps, creating a temporary difference between Edward Bulwer and his brothers? Mrs. Lytton had throughout acted on the theory that her daughter-in-law elect, when once acquainted with her unacceptableness to the race with which she aspired to connect herself, and with her future husband's comparative poverty, would herself have broken off the engagement. Even so, the rupture, to be effectual,

required another person's consent. Can it be believed for a moment that a passionate lover, as Edward Bulwer was then, would have accepted the release? Probably with more wisdom, temper, and self-control on the Lytton side the marriage might, even at the eleventh hour, have been averted. But all the steps to this end taken by Mrs. Lytton were calculated to ensure and hasten the detested union. Had Bulwer himself after his early fashion introduced this episode, as literally as he did other incidents in real life, into one of his novels, not only the professional critics, but friendly readers speaking with some experience of real life and character, would have charged him with gross exaggeration of the possibilities. No shrewd woman of the world, they might have said, like the mistress of Knebworth, could have committed one social blunder after another, each rendering more of a certainty the marriage she was straining her wits and resources to avert.

Such were the private discords calculated neither to increase Edward Bulwer's wedded happiness at Woodcot nor to cheer and strengthen him in his incessant plying of the pen. At home he received frequent visits from his brothers in turn, as well as from friends, old and new. His mother, however, still frowned upon all his overtures. She had received, ungraciously enough, the customary piece of bridal cake, and through her son Henry had intimated that she could dispense with any further attentions from the freshly married couple. His mother's estrangement, the bitterness on both sides preceding a series of conciliatory overtures, the bickerings that ensued upon a hollow truce and caused the quarrel to break out afresh,—so worried Edward Bulwer as, together with his systematic overwork, to bring about a nervous breakdown whose premonitions began to be felt in 1833. So far, however, the head of the little Woodcot household admitted no necessity for relaxing the fierce drudgery of pen and ink to

keep the wolf from the door. The bookish *dilettante*, the severe but irresponsible student, the literary epicurean of Versailles, writing only for his own pleasure, with no fear of publisher or public, had become the hired producer of "copy" to editors' order, and the writer-up to "cuts" in annuals or magazines. The Oxfordshire home of the Bulwers was thus a manufactory of mere pot-boilers. That industry followed upon the fresh literary features of the time, but the new growth of daily papers and weekly or monthly miscellanies still left some room for the earlier albums, keepsakes, beauty manuals, or still more modish literary devices printed on embossed paper, and nominally edited by ladies of quality or pen-women of fashion. Then there was the *Examiner*, conducted by the most intimate of Bulwer's literary friends, John Forster. Bulwer's productions, however, penetrated into every corner of the entire periodical press. The short stories written by him at this time, if collected, would be found to amount in bulk to more than a three-volume novel.

One or two short articles, on the rise of the Greek drama and on the Athenian democracy, formed the germ out of which grew, a little later in this period, the already mentioned *Athens*. It was necessary now and then to beat out the gold leaf very thin, and even to use it more than once. Thus some magazine pieces, *Comic Adventures in Paris*, also did duty, and at very nearly the same time, for *Pelham*. A first-rate leader-writer on any class of topics Bulwer never took the trouble to make himself. But some literary and political articles he found himself compelled to write at this time were altogether of a better quality than the "padding" for *Pelham*. John Forster never, even to oblige friends, printed rubbish in the *Examiner*. Bulwer's careful criticisms in that paper of Miss Porter's novels and Miss Landon's and Mrs. Hemans' poetry really deserved preservation in some more enduring form. After his lofty projects

for winning immortality by the fruitage of his fancy and the harvest of his learning, Bulwer-Lytton, degraded into a literary hack, was in the position of a schoolboy who, having been sent down to the bottom of his class, begins industriously to work himself again towards the top. These experiences may be allegorically reflected in those of Philip Beaufort (*Night and Morning*) who, having received the highest education of a gentleman, finds himself through adverse circumstances earning his livelihood merely by his power of sitting a horse. The writing with which he had formerly varied his reading had been done for amusement, with no thought of profit or, in all cases, even of publication. He had therefore picked his subjects according to his taste. He could now afford to read little and to write nothing that did not admit of being turned to immediate pecuniary profit. The staple of his industry was formed by verses or scenes of drawing-room dramas, generally as a letterpress accompaniment for engravings which some bookseller had bought at a bargain and which he wanted to sell off. Thackeray himself, indeed, never went through the literary mill more thoroughly than, eight years before him, was done by Bulwer. The two men had more than one opportunity of comparing notes on their early struggles. They did not open their bosoms to each other too freely, but John Forster, who knew them both equally well, had heard Thackeray, *à propos* of Bulwer's reminiscences of verse-making to suit the engraver, exclaim: "That is the way in which I ground out all the best lines I ever did, especially those about a youth ogling a damsel from a wine-shop, given in *Pendennis* under the title of 'At the Church Gate.'" The severity and protraction of this ordeal might have been borne more cheerfully by Bulwer, and have been without many of the irritable outbursts that tried his wife so sorely, but for the constant ringing in his ears of his mother's prediction on

the eve of his marriage: "If," Mrs. Lytton had pleasantly said, "you marry this woman, you will be, in less than a year, the most miserable man in England." Unfortunately, Mrs. Lytton's anticipation, and other remarks from the same quarter to a like effect, lingered in the memory and rankled in the heart of Bulwer's wife, who at times resented with natural bitterness her mother-in-law's disfavour, and the necessity which it laid upon her husband of an industrious slavery so incessant as almost entirely to deprive her of his society. For, realizing to the full the precarious nature of the maternal subsidies, Bulwer had determined not to count upon them, and as best he could to earn enough to support himself and his household.

Yet amid the gloom of this pitiless grind from day to day, and the thickening presages of home storms, the Woodcot life did not lack some shining and picturesque spots. The mistress of Woodcot liked clever society; she could scarcely have had brighter guests than Benjamin Disraeli, whom she had first met long before at Samuel Rogers', and her husband's two brothers, not to mention a life-long intimate of her own sex, Miss Greene, who afterwards showed herself, to three generations of Lyttons, the best friend they ever had, and who was at Woodcot for some weeks during the period of Mrs. Bulwer's first confinement. This lady, who had not seen the master of the house before, was met by him on her arrival at the local railway station, bearing the ominous name of Nettlebed. "The first sight of him," records this visitor, pleased me much, 'but,' I mentally said, 'he is too young,' for, youthful as he was, he looked a good deal younger still. His conversation as we drove home was that one only expects from an experienced man of the world,—very original but thoroughly unaffected, and while his words came from his heart they were those of admiration and affection for his wife. When, after driving up the lawn, she met me in the

hall, I saw my Rosina of the old days had grown into the handsomest woman I have ever beheld." Even in her girlhood Rosina Wheeler's beauty was of a mature type. That fact may at once explain its fascination for her future husband as a youth of two-and-twenty, and Mrs. Lytton's suspicions of the Irish birth registers having been cooked, and her daughter-in-law being six years rather than six months older than her son. After the birth of the Bulwers' first child—a daughter—(June 27, 1828), Edward Bulwer's eldest brother, the head of the family, and the owner of Heydon, also incurred the maternal displeasure by making what Mrs. Lytton considered an unsuitable marriage. This quickened his sympathies with his brother, and after one of his sojourns at Woodcot made William Bulwer in a home letter say: "You could not have a prettier sight than Rosina's and Edward's devotion to each other." William Bulwer, something of an artist as well as of a poet, drew a pencil sketch at this time of his brother and sister-in-law, with, at their side, two dogs, one a King Charles spaniel of the Blenheim breed, the other a huge black Newfoundland answering to the name of "Terror," and then about to be immortalized in Bulwerian fiction as the original of Glanville's constant four-legged companion, who in *Pelham* terrifies by his loud growl the Virgil-quoting peer Vincent.

The situation, therefore, of the house to which Bulwer took his bride, may have been retired; there was nothing of unbroken or cruel solitude in the round of its daily life. The residence at Woodcot was towards the end of 1827 drawing to its close; Edward Bulwer had already begun his house-hunting visits to London. Those were the days in which fashion had for some time deserted the capacious and moderately rented houses of Bloomsbury on the score of remoteness, and when Theodore Hook, accepting a dinner invitation to Russell Square,

said to his host: "But please tell my coachman where we change horses." Bulwer naturally shrank from being driven to regions so remote as this. After much study of the map of London Bulwer had discovered on the other side of the civilized world's boundary, Oxford Street, places known by the name of Portman Square, Portland Place, or something of that sort. "Pity me if I am exiled to any such barbarous latitudes; though," he adds to Mrs. Cunningham, "you will think I may be happy even there with my Rose, whom I long to show you and who is just in your style. Dark hair, bright complexion, dazzling teeth." The other lady to whom in the last year of his Woodcot stay Bulwer wrote many letters, was his mother. She, as regards all personal intercourse, still persisted in her ruthless estrangement from Edward Bulwer and his wife. With the close of the Woodcot period began the dawn of a brighter day in Edward Bulwer's literary fortunes. When a little later he settled in London it was as an author whose success was already assured by his second novel. *Pelham* had been begun during his Cambridge days, in 1825, and advanced some way during his first residence abroad, after taking his degree. It had been almost ready for the printer at the date of *Falkland's* publication, and the reception of *Falkland*, so far from prejudicing Bulwer with his publisher, brought him an offer from Colburn of £500 for another novel of the same length in a more popular style. Of that proposal the despatch of *Pelham* to the publisher from Woodcot, early in 1828, formed the practical acceptance. One after the other Colburn's two "readers" pronounced the newly delivered manuscript not worth the paper on which it was written. Colburn, therefore, lost no time in looking at the book himself. "It will be," was his instant conclusion, "the book of the year." The passing of the Great Remonstrance came just in time to prevent Oliver Cromwell's going to America as he had

resolved to do if it had failed. Colburn's approval of *Pelham*, with an enclosed cheque for £500, reached Edward Bulwer at the moment of his meditating complete retirement from literature in exclusive favour of politics. On the 10th of June, 1828, appeared the novel that was so signally to falsify the prediction of the publisher's experts, and by its subsequent success to move Colburn himself, according to one account, to send its author a second five hundred pounds. Its success was not, however, immediate. Bulwer had himself written a good deal in the *Literary Gazette*, the *Examiner*, and the *Atlas*. Each of these papers spoke of the new book appreciatively. For the rest, the press was but amiably contemptuous, or coldly encouraging. To Bulwer's bitter mortification, the great reviews ignored him and everything from his pen. These circumstances in later life were often referred to by the man who had experienced them, and who bade young writers draw from them the conclusion that the professional critics are not the real arbiters of literary success.

Madame de Staël had somewhere noticed the success on the stage of a character at once sentimental and gay. The remark so impressed Bulwer as really to inspire him with the character of Pelham: "Why," he constantly asked himself, "should it not be with the novel as with the stage?" In the story Lady Roseville says to Pelham himself: "Although to the superficial you seem frivolous, you have a mind not only capable of the most solid and important affairs, but, as a fact, constantly considering them. Your effeminacy is a cloak for daring courage, your languid indifference conceals the most active ambition. The selfishness you affect does not prevent my seeing that no worldly interest could bribe you into meanness or injustice." Lady Roseville's estimate of the hero forms the keynote of the whole story. *Falkland* portrayed a character capable, perhaps, of better things, ruined by a brooding egotism

and an ignoble deadness to the healthy activities of life. Pelham's deepening sense of social and personal obligations turns the follies and self-indulgence of youth into an effective training for bright and useful service to his generation. It has already been seen that the adventures of the gentleman named Pelham were the literal experiences of the other gentleman, Edward Bulwer. The drawing-rooms and gambling-houses of Paris, the inner life of fashionable "sets" in London ;—with all these Bulwer's personal acquaintance had begun while the author of *Pelham* was yet a boy. Moreover, with his earliest opportunities of observing them had come a clear intention of writing about them.

This first-hand acquaintance with the life and personages he described formed only part of his preparation for producing the book. Before *Pelham* was finished, he had studied the art of plot construction in the hands of its greatest masters, ancient and modern. Conventionally called by the booksellers and the libraries a novel of fashionable life, *Pelham* was primarily intended for a satire. It owed most of its early success to the personalities which imparted a spice of innocuous scandal to the story, and set every one guessing the originals of the characters. Popular interest in the book was first aroused, and its author's notoriety assured, by the shrewd and uncontradicted conjecture that Pelham's life in London, in Paris, and at various fashionable watering-places was that lived by Bulwer himself. The clerical scholar Clutterbuck, absorbed in his classical studies, bullied by his wife, found his real prototype in Richard Warburton Lytton. In his verses about Almack's (1825), Bulwer had referred to Samuel Rogers. Pelham's dinner-table talker, cruelly scaring the gourmand Guloseton by his remarks about truffles, recalled to the readers of that generation the banker-poet, who excused his spiteful tongue by the weak voice which would prevent any one

listening to him if he did not speak uncharitably about his friends. Among the paper curiosities at Knebworth used to be some pen-and-ink portraits, hurriedly but effectively dashed off in surprisingly few strokes. These were the work of Bulwer's valet, a Frenchman, who gave them to his master on leaving his service, and who before that had sat to the novelist for Pelham's private servant Bedos.

Twelve years after *Pelham's* publication, the great arbiter of dress and taste during the Regency, Beau Brummel, died in want and squalor at Caen. Being a novel of the Regency period, *Pelham* reflected Brummel in Russelton. Several other of the smaller characters were transcripts from actual existence. Thus, there had been by that name at Cambridge in Bulwer's time a flesh-and-blood Jemmy Gordon, a tipsy barber ever introducing familiar classical tags into his talk. The already mentioned Vincent, with his Virgilian allusions veiling much scholarship and shrewd knowledge of the world, at once identified himself with Thomas Walker of the *Original*, then a London police magistrate. The *gourmet* Lord Alvanley is exaggerated into Guloseton. Pelham himself, though in many details the author's double, also possessed some features recalling Villiers, Bulwer's Cambridge friend who first accompanied him to Paris. Sir Reginald Glanville personifies the Byronic melancholy and gloom which Bulwer, indeed, but not all his contemporaries had outgrown. The elderly young gentleman who can be "as sad as night for very wantonness" forms an effective contrast to the gaily epicurean figure after whom the book is called, and who laughs off with a joke what makes Glanville groan and scowl. Tyrrell's murder by Thornton reproduces in most of its circumstances that, in 1824, of Weare, by Thurtell, a low gambler and scoundrel of antecedents exactly resembling Thornton's.

Society had for some time become bored with Childe Harold and his cant, as Macaulay put it, of hating one's

neighbour and loving one's neighbour's wife. Elsewhere the process was not so quick, but at once in drawing-rooms, Pelhamism cast out Byronism, and ladies especially showed their gratitude to Pelham's creator for having rid them of a nuisance. Amongst many gifts from *Pelham's* fair admirers Bulwer through many years of his life retained and used a beautifully made and profusely furnished dressing-case, with a variety of hand looking-glasses, which the donor felt sure would be particularly useful! Byron worship had made pasty-faced youths conspicuous by large expanses of turned-down collar. *Pelham* caused the black swallow-tail coat to become compulsory for evening wear. Lady Frances Pelham in the novel had said that to look well in black was a great proof of personal distinction. The upper garments of many colours hitherto seen at dinner-tables and in drawing-rooms, before 1828 was out, had been superseded by a uniform monotony of sable. Fortunate in the date of its appearance, *Pelham* owed much to its distinctive difference from the ordinary run of fashionable fiction at that time.

Few of these books aimed at doing more than introducing their readers to places and personages labelled with names dear to Mrs. Wititterly. One element in this fashionable reading regarded by its publishers as indispensable to success was what they called "dialogue." In this, cleverness and smartness, if forthcoming, might be very well. The only thing absolutely necessary, however, was an echo of the "small talk" really heard on West-End first floors—elegant chit-chat, as it is called by the publisher in an interview with an author whom Bulwer introduces in Chapter XXIX of the *Disowned*.* To no purpose, the author-aspirant remarked, that if this sort of thing was to be done to the life, it could neither be witty nor entertaining; or asked when the very best con-

* The *Disowned*, p. 147, "Knebworth" edition.

versation one can get is unsufferably dull, how can people be amused by reading a copy of the very worst? The publisher could only say, once and for all,—“They are amused, and works of this kind *sell*.” On *Pelham*’s appearance, in addition to Theodore Hook, and at a great interval after Sir Walter Scott, the novelists of the day were Jane Austen, Miss Burney, Maria Edgeworth, so highly appreciated by Scott himself; Godwin, who wrote *Caleb Williams*, and John Moore, a Scotch doctor, a Stirling minister’s son, who had acted as the young Duke of Hamilton’s travelling physician, who had written books about the chief European countries, and had described, in widely popular stories, the polite life of France and Switzerland; while another of his novels, *Zeluco*, had suggested to Byron the machinery of *Childe Harold*.

Pelham succeeded, therefore, first because it was fresh, and secondly, as already said, because it was personal. It had no sooner gone the round of the circulating libraries than keys to its characters were devised by those behind the scenes in London, and, first in manuscript, then in print, passed from one reader to another in the provinces. Not, however, the suspicion of scandal would have made it a landmark in nineteenth-century fiction had it only handled Theodore Hook’s subjects in Theodore Hook’s manner. And then *Pelham* himself; a dandy, indeed, with some of the veneer of the puppydom which was the mode, a citizen of the world, as much at home in the *salons* of the Faubourg St. Germain as in the assemblies of its English equivalent St. James’s Square, but, with all his affectations, a true-bred, earnest-minded Englishman, able to master any subject he might take up, in or out of Parliament. The most popular among British ambassadors in Paris of recent days was Lord Lyons, because he seemed the most typical representative of the English character. In the same way *Pelham* at once became and still remains

a French favourite, less by reason of his shrewd cosmopolitanism and his Parisian polish than of his essentially British perseverance, thoroughness, and pluck. That, too, was the feature in the book which delighted critics so illustrious as Sir Walter Scott and the then King of England. The author of *Waverley's* fifty-seven years had not cooled his ardent Toryism. While admiring *Pelham* for its varied interest, and its author's great ability, Scott deplored "a twist in his politics." As for George IV, he ordered a copy for each of his palaces and read it through more than once at a heat. The two Disraelis, father and son, praised its cleverness, but expected still better things from its writer. France, and the west European public generally, had nothing but praise for the novel; in the year of its publication the *Revue des Deux Mondes* declared the whole opinion of Paris for once to be in accord with that of London. Before it had been out eighteen months, German, Italian, and Spanish translations repeated with foreigners the success of the original throughout the English-reading world.

And so throughout the period of its first publication went on *Pelham*, conned by genteel aspirants to "society" for "example of life and instruction of manners" of fine people, skimmed by those calling themselves "society" because it was supposed to caricature so many of their friends. Writing about this book to Mrs. Cunningham, Bulwer could say: "I have no more spared my French than my London acquaintances." Doubling the part of the Eton buck with that of the Paris *gommeux*, Pelham himself seemed a compliment to both classes, because he showed that the *flâneur* of the boulevards not less than of Pall Mall might combine with the drawl and languor of sweldom a knightly courage and penetrating intellect. German enthusiasm had exhausted its superlatives on *Falkland* without, fortunately for himself, making its author regard his first book as anything more than a

pretentious though not unpromising mistake. *Pelham* established him upon a foundation not only of notoriety for the moment, but of a popularity so lasting and broad as to assure him the place among novelists which subsequent performances enabled him to make good against the competition he was to encounter from Dickens and Thackeray. What might have been Bulwer's fate, without having a start of his two greatest contemporaries, is a profitless speculation. Enough for the present to remember that the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the revival of the English novel by those now considered its greatest masters. Bulwer's claim to share in that movement was first asserted by *Pelham*. The claim once made found its support in other fictions belonging to that stage of his course now reached. Then, thereafter, and to the close of his life, more deliberately, carefully than did any of his contemporaries, Bulwer-Lytton thought and wrote for no single or limited section of the reading public, but addressed himself impartially to all classes with the object of allaying sectarian bitterness, or of drawing forth those aspirations and sympathies which, in some shape, degree or other, he considered the common possession of the English-speaking race.

CHAPTER VII

THE BEGINNINGS OF LONDON LIFE

Literary life in London—An autocratic house agent—Bulwer as slave of the pen—Tactlessness of his mother and wife—Their hostility towards each other—Bulwer's efforts at reconciliation—A meeting between Mrs. Lytton and her daughter-in-law only widens the breach—Misunderstandings between Bulwer and his wife—Appearance of the *Disowned*—Its close relation to the author's own life—Success of *Devereux*, his first historical novel—Fraternal jealousy in *Devereux*, a reflection of the rivalry of the brothers Bulwer in respect of the Knebworth estates—Completion of *Paul Clifford*—Its political influence—Contemporary celebrities in the guise of criminals—Bulwer's efforts for the mitigation of "human dry rot"—Production of *Eugene Aram*, his second book dealing with crime—Aram's originals in real life—First touches of the supernatural appear in *Godolphin*—Its intermediate position among his literary works—Autobiographical associations.

THE success of *Pelham* coincides with the beginning of Bulwer's literary life in London; in a way presently to be seen it is locally connected itself with the Mayfair house which, in the first year of William IV, became his home. Woodcot had been finally left in September, 1829; on their way to the more fashionable quarter the Bulwers, with their little girl, found a suburban resting-place at Vine Cottage, Fulham. The negotiations for acquiring possession of 36 Hertford Street were, meanwhile, being carried on with a well-known estate agent and builder of the time,—Nash, who had made a fortune by purveying and beautifying domiciles for the privileged classes. The success of Bulwer's second novel alone made this magnificent person condescend to do business with its author and in consideration of his literary fame to assist in housing a client who was not a peer. And this only after long insistence on terms so extortionate as to be prohibitive.

Even at what on both sides was understood to be the final interview, Nash, with all his former obstinate bounce and not without some oaths, delivered his ultimatum and seemed preparing to bow his visitors out, when, pausing for a moment, he said, his manner changing in a moment from abrupt insolence to bland obsequiousness: "Can it be possible, sir, you should be at all related to that wonderful young man who has written the delightful novel of *Pelham*?" On hearing the facts, the man of bricks and mortar, now using his expletives to express not indifference, but his enthusiastic admiration, said: "Well, then, sir, for *Pelham's* sake you must have the house at your own price, and I'll make it one of the handsomest mansions in town for you, with the best library. And if you ever again write anything half as good as *Pelham*, d——d glad shall I be to think I planned the room you wrote it in."

This, I may say, is word for word the account of the transaction given by Bulwer himself at the time to his intimate friend Lord Henry Bentinck. That brother of the Duke of Portland, by the by, as much of an expert in London houses as Lord George Bentinck in horse-flesh, many years afterwards, in 1866, gave Lord Lytton the soundest advice in the house buying which had then become his hobby. At the date last mentioned the abode Lord Lytton consulted Lord Henry about acquiring belonged to their common friend, Mr. Henry Chaplin. How came it that in 1830 Edward Bulwer found himself in a position to acquire a residence in the very heart of fashionable London's most desirable district? He was still on his promotion with public editors. His patrimony did not exceed £200 a year. His pride prevented the acceptance on his mother's terms of the help she was willing to give. Here some domestic retrospect becomes necessary for rightly understanding Bulwer's present relations with his mother. Up to the point now reached, that lady, whatever sacrifices

for her son's happiness she was willing to make, had herself largely contributed to the fulfilment of her prediction that within twelve months of his marrying Miss Wheeler Edward Bulwer would find himself the most miserable of men. First she had reminded him even in the Woodcote days of his inability properly to support himself without her help. That, of course, had the effect of making him slave the more pitilessly at any commissions in pen-and-ink journeyman-ship offered to him. His own patient bravery sealed his lips against complaints of drudgery. His mother, however, renewed her reproaches at his stooping to work so much below his station. If, said the proud mistress of Knebworth, the odd jobs her son undertook were not morally degrading, surely he must recognize them to be ignoble in themselves, and therefore altogether unworthy of a Bulwer, still more of a Lytton. He knew, said this impracticable parent, he had only to ask her; supplies would come in and the danger of degradation into a Grub Street hack would be averted. Even without request or suggestion on his part his mother periodically showed that she could combinē a taunting tongue with an open purse. There was, indeed, as yet no quarterly allowance after the former fashion, but whenever the balance at his banker's had become dangerously low, unexplained credits found their way to his account. These acts of generosity were constantly accompanied by comments very galling to the young man who, to ensure his own and his family's independence, was overstraining his brain and nerves by incessant daily and nightly toil, for pay that would have been looked down upon by a second-rate hack of Fleet Street or Pater-noster Row.

Those just mentioned formed only a part of his worries. His purely domestic troubles had not yet begun to assume the disastrous form they afterwards took, but the honeymoon had not long ended when Mrs. Bulwer showed herself

far from a perfect helpmate for an overdone breadwinner. Housekeeping was not her *forte*; the Irish wastefulness or improvidence in the arrangements of her home first perpetually irritated, and was soon resented by her husband. The lady on her part never lacked the sense of a grievance personal to herself. Absorbed in work demanding all his energies and time, he could not be much of a companion to his wife. As a fact, for weeks together, his employments in the Woodcot study, and his absences in London on literary or newspaper business, restricted Mrs. Bulwer's enjoyment of his society to an hour or two in the twenty-four. No industry, however unwearied, and no success, however uniform, can guarantee the literary worker against more disappointments and vexations than necessarily fall to the lot of labourers in other callings. A cross or difficulty, trifling in itself, may at any unforeseen moment overwhelm the man who lives by his pen with a heartbreaking sense of failure irretrievable, or of impending ruin, by no pains within his own reach long to be delayed. When he happens to be of a proud spirit, naturally carrying his head high, his state must constantly border, not merely on misery, but on positive excruciation. If he be wise, knowing the danger, he struggles to possess his soul in patience. Such a discreet reserve exposes him, of course, with those about him to the charge of moroseness.

This had long been the case with Bulwer at Woodcot. Had her solicitude been accompanied by more sagacity, his wife would have let the fits of irritable dejection wear themselves out. Instead, she expressed her sympathy with Bulwer's manifold and manifest troubles of the lesser sort by condolences and questions that had the effect, not of allaying his irritation, but of straining beyond endurance a temper already exacerbated by those trials which, from their very insignificance, are the more bitter to a shy and haughty spirit. In great miseries there may be a certain

dignity that alleviates as well as refines. The ignoble melancholy due in any part to pecuniary difficulty, and the meanness of those with whom association is compulsory, is a burden which the most angelic nature can bear best without any commiserating aid. All tempers, it has been said, are naturally bad, but some people manage to show less of them than others. Jaded by excessive work, in which he could take no pride, the master of Woodcot writhed under the ill-timed enquiries of an anxiety which might have been helpful if it had been entirely silent. Visitors at his country house spoke of his impressing them as a man who had been half flayed, and was sore all over. Personal intercourse between his wife and his mother had not yet come. Between the two, however, there passed frequent letters. Mrs. Lytton's tone became much more tender after the daughter's birth, in 1828; she implored her daughter-in-law to prevent her husband from wearing himself out by literary tasks which had nothing exalting about them, considerably and not ambiguously intimating that if he earned less the deficiency might be made good from the Knebworth wealth.

Neither then, however, nor, indeed, at any later time, did the three persons immediately concerned make any real effort towards a reconciliation that should embrace each member of the group. Mrs. Lytton constantly irritated her son, exasperated his wife, and unintentionally did her utmost towards making things uncomfortable all round, openly lamenting that the price paid by Edward Bulwer for his marriage was his own indefinite sentence to a penny-a-liner's lot. Such a display of maternal concern, quite as much as any incompatibility of temper between Mr. and Mrs. Bulwer, contributed to ensure the connubial catastrophe, destined to darken, if not destroy, two lives. It was not till some time later, after the settlement in Hertford Street, that the son openly took fire at

Mrs. Lytton's unhappy phraseology. But even through most of the Woodcot days, the attitude of professional almsgiver, so congenial to the lady who lived at Knebworth, exercised anything but a pacific influence on the Bulwer home life. Impulsively, and so rather capriciously munificent, Mrs. Lytton might claim, not without justice, the credit of being an unselfish, a devoted and—as she let it be known she thought herself—in all ways an exemplary mother. That did not prevent her exacting from those she loved best the deference due to one born a great heiress, as well as a grand lady not less than a very wealthy one. Loyalty to the long line of her Hertfordshire ancestors seemed to render it an ancestral duty that the Lyttons should be given rank and consideration above the Bulwers. She had from the first successfully resisted her husband's wish to fuse the Lytton estates in the Bulwer heritage. Heydon and all the Norfolk acres were the legal patrimony of her first-born, who, according to General Bulwer's plan, would by right of birth have had Knebworth too. As it was she always refused to relax her hold upon that property. Throughout her life she retained the power of devising it to any one she chose. Her two elder sons were well provided for, and, indeed, rich men,—William as the master of Heydon, Henry in consequence of her mother's arrangements on his behalf, if not of her own liberality also,—in either case he had been enriched not as a Bulwer, but as a Lytton. So it was to be with her youngest and favourite, Edward; till his marriage he had never known a care; from adolescence he had lived the life of a fine gentleman with finer expectations, enjoying every aspect of existence to the full, ordering all his movements with a single eye to his own pleasure, nor without a due regard for the splendour of the Lytton name.

To the lady despot of the home county Rosina Wheeler was a bad, bold, Irish adventuress. It was, of course,

natural that "this elderly girl from Limerick" should fall in love with so gifted and irresistible a young gentleman as Mr. Lytton-Bulwer. Had it all ended there Mr. Lytton-Bulwer's maternal relative would have deigned to forgive Miss Wheeler, and say no more about it. But when this representative of the Lyttons, mistaking for a serious attachment what was, might be, ought to have been, a transiently amorous ebullition, had so far forgotten himself as actually to offer her, Rosina Wheeler, marriage, the course to be pursued by the object of his juvenile infatuation was, to any right-minded young woman, perfectly clear;—she should have reflected how great and glorious these Lyttons had always been. Heroes who fought by the side of Godfrey de Bouillon in the first Crusade, they had, in a later generation, condescended to act as peacemakers between king and Parliament in the Civil Wars, and, while favourites and sinecures of a court, to serve their sovereign as intermediaries with the commonalty. A female who had reached years of discretion, and who saw things in a proper light, occupying a station like Rosina Wheeler's, ought not to have hesitated a moment. She should meekly have thanked the brilliant being she had captivated for the proposed honour, should have reminded him that the Irish kings from whom, indeed, she could claim descent, were unworthy of comparison with the Hertfordshire patricians whose blood ran in his own veins. Then, with arms ingenuously folded on her breast, she should have made a low obeisance and vanished from his presence, either into a convent near the former home of her misguided, democratic, probably atheistic mother at Caen, or in some obscure corner of her native Connaught. Instead of that, without first confessing herself to be, by a full six months, her husband's elder, she had actually allowed herself to become Mrs. Lytton-Bulwer to-day, with—who knew?—the reversionary title of Mrs. Bulwer-

Lytton ! Worse than all this,—and here it was the natural anxiety of the parent rather than the pride of the Knebworth princess which came in,—Mrs. Lytton knew her son to be undermining his health, clouding his spirits, and tarnishing the gloss of his still youthful beauty, by his efforts to support a wife whose own pittance would not have paid her washing bills.

On the other hand Mrs. Lytton's daughter-in-law, so far from being openly and abjectly penitent, had the audacity to comport herself as if she were entitled at least to her own self-respect. She actually did not conceal from her husband her objection passively to acquiesce in what both she and he considered Mrs. Lytton's systematic affronts to her daughter-in-law. At Woodcot, indeed, none of these could be given or received, for the simple reason that Mrs. Lytton then never crossed her son's threshold, never saw him elsewhere, nor recognized him in any way. From his two brothers, pretty frequent visitors at Woodcot, Mrs. Lytton heard of Edward Bulwer's galley-slave routine from day to day, year in and year out. This descendant of Sir Roland, Sir Rupert, and any number of knightly Lyttons, for himself, for the Irish hussy, and for whatever brats there might be, that body and soul might be kept together, had to bargain with booksellers just like any common plier of the pen, nurtured on printer's ink and turned up in proofs ; to receive instructions from editors, keep time with compositors, and submit to a thousand other nameless degradations enough to make the bones of all the Lyttons turn in the family vault at Knebworth.

So long as a day's journey separated the dwellings of Mrs. Lytton and her son the sentiments just described might be kept under, or were not in danger of causing an explosion. With the transfer of the Woodcot household to Mayfair the whole situation was changed. The

two ladies, in the houses of relations, of family friends, or in general society, could not hope to avoid meeting each other sometimes, and might have to do so frequently. To prevent the certainty of "talk" and the possibility of "scenes" Edward Bulwer urged on his mother, if not an actual treaty with his wife, yet an attitude towards her of benevolent neutrality, such as would silence malicious tongues and deprive the mischief-manufacturers of the drawing-room parts in a new school for scandal. Moreover, Mrs. Lytton's son entertained and desired to show a genuine affection for his mother; between himself and her there could not be, as matters were, those terms of mutual friendship and confidence which he desired, and to which he believed his mother could not be really disinclined. Of course, had the three persons now concerned been willing to concede a point to each other, a friendly settlement would have immediately followed. The cause of the continued coldness between the Lytton-Bulwer and Bulwer-Lytton factions was the same as that which, seven years later, resulted in the final separation between Edward Bulwer and his wife. Neither the mistress of 36 Hertford Street, nor the *châtelaine* of Knebworth, was prepared to bate a jot of her dignity in her attitude towards the other. The spirit of compromise at no time really possessed the soul of Mrs. Lytton or of her daughter-in-law; equally absent was it afterwards from both Mr. and Mrs. Bulwer themselves. For the present, Edward Bulwer reminded his mother of her prediction that a life's wretchedness would follow the first year of his married state; now, he plainly added, his mother's own conduct was doing all that seemed possible to fulfil the horoscope she had drawn. "Not," he said, "to visit my wife is to affront me, is to embitter my life irremediably, as well as—what is far worse—to injure in the most vital point an innocent and unoffending person,

who is disposed to show in all ways affection for you, and whose only fault as regards yourself is that she is my wife."

Nothing could be more forcible or becoming than the way in which these considerations were urged. Unfortunately for Edward Bulwer, his mother recognized their cogency, relented, and called on his wife as her son desired. She was, of course, dissatisfied with her reception. Mrs. Lytton could easily have mentioned two particular reasons why, on this occasion, she ought to have been welcomed, not only with the affection that was her maternal due, but with the reverential gratitude that a generous and forgiving benefactress might claim. In the first place, solely and entirely to please her son, she had done violence to her own sentiments by visiting the younger lady who had committed the unpardonable sin of becoming her daughter-in-law. In the second place, she had for some time been surrendering a thousand a year of her own income to relieve him of the labour, confinement, and great mental anxiety that he admitted were necessary to earn that amount for himself. The Knebworth potentate's departure from Hertford Street was followed, the same week if not the same day, by just the letter that might have been expected. She had not, she told her son, observed sufficient signs of the grateful respect that he must confess was her due, seeing that she it was who maintained her daughter-in-law. This letter set its recipient's whole nature in a flame. The son of General Bulwer of Heydon, the grandson and, after a fashion, the destined heir of Warburton Lytton of Knebworth, dependent upon the charity of any human being—even a mother—for his own or his family's livelihood! The thing was not only intolerable, but absurd. While he retained the use of his limbs and brain, self-respect would forbid his stooping to receive charity, which his mother clearly considered her subsidies to be; of these,

some he at once repaid; for others, he protested, he held himself liable in full. The only consideration he begged or would accept was permission to make good the balance against him by instalments.

This incident may serve as a crowning proof of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of effecting a family reconciliation when, as was the case with each member of the Bulwer-Lytton group, none had the notion of consenting to any compromise of personal dignity, or surrendering in the merest trifle the demands of self-love. Mrs. Lytton had disregarded her fondest prejudices, and was still priding herself on an extraordinary exhibition of magnanimity in crossing her son's threshold. Charged both by her mother-in-law and her husband with an insufficient show of grateful deference on that great occasion, Mrs. Lytton-Bulwer pleaded openly she had done her best, and privately thought that, with a little patience, Time's whirligig might work its revenges. For the present, however, the former Rosina Wheeler decorously restrained the ridiculous Irish pride which had offended her mother-in-law. In London, as in the country, Edward Bulwer's work occupied every moment of his time from morning to night. His constitutional irritability, aggravated by overwork, business anxieties, and a complication of family feuds generally raging or always recrudescing, often made him unapproachable. The tranquillizing agencies of home happiness were denied him, for the children, often not only in name, but in reality a pledge of love, and a guarantee of marriage happiness, became in the Lytton-Bulwer household an occasion of war. The mother's health did not permit her to nurture her infants from the first. The daughter was therefore put out to nurse. The son's birth took place November 8, 1831; by that time Mrs. Lytton-Bulwer retained little of the maternal enthusiasm or interest which causes so much of tenderness, of pure and peaceful

charm, radiating from the nursery, to reach the most pre-occupied of bread-winning husbands. Edward Bulwer's mother was full of fond thought for her newly arrived grandson. All this was acknowledged by Edward Bulwer's wife, who had heard the little boy's nurse, with tears in her eyes, speak of the "immense kindness" showered upon the infant by the "grand lady of Knebworth." "A very generous, as well as a conscientious, good woman," is the praise given to her mother-in-law by Mrs. Bulwer in a letter to an intimate friend.

Always fighting against time in his writing, constantly almost maddened by hindrances and interruptions which he might reasonably have expected to have been spared when at work, Bulwer must have been either a stoic or a Job always to have maintained his equanimity, and to have presented a uniformly unruffled front. The capacity for literary production is allied in most cases with the nervous, irritable temperament. His home circumstances never allowed Bulwer a fair chance of disciplining or restraining the congenital, and it may be morbid sensibility that resents the trifling and accidental annoyances of the moment as if they were deliberately inflicted wrongs. Still, as husbands go, a reasonable wife might have reflected that he was "well enough." Severely parsimonious in his own expenditure, he naturally resented certain items of his wife's pecuniary mismanagement, so gross as to recall Dora's purchase of a barrel of oysters and a whole codfish for the family dinner of two in *David Copperfield*. And Edward Bulwer had little about him of Dora's husband; though Dickens' masterpiece contains what might well be called a prototype of Bulwer in Steerforth. Moreover, Mrs. Lytton-Bulwer, had her Irish wit been equal to her Irish pride, was never without some reason for saying: "This man, with all his abominable humours and passions, really means well to me." On one New Year's morning

there came to her what he called a "little Christmas box," in the shape of an immense package from Messrs. Howell and James, full of most beautiful dresses and shawls. On another anniversary the husband's gift was a gold thimble, with precious stones, designed by himself, for which he had the absurdity to pay fifteen guineas,—and that when he was too poor to buy a pony he wanted for himself. It is in connection with incidents of this kind that the first Earl of Lytton, in the exhaustive memoir of his father, recalls a passage from Bulwer's unpublished and unfinished play *Darnley*. Here a husband, replying to his wife's reproaches for neglect, says: "Wearied, exhausted in all my anxieties, in all my toils, to think that these my uncongenial habits were adding to the joys of your youth." This is but a slight specimen of the close relation existing at this time between Bulwer's public writings and private experiences.

While staying for the health of his wife and daughter at Weymouth, in the December of 1828, he had sent his mother the novel which followed *Pelham*, and which was not actually published till 1829. The *Disowned*, like its two predecessors, bore no author's name on the title-page. The accounts of gypsy life are not the only portions of this story drawn from personal experience, or reflecting real characters and actual events. Piety amid all temptations in a woman, in a man firm trust under all anxieties in God, are with Bulwer the essentials of true religion. The preface, dated May 3, 1852 ("Knebworth" edition), describes the *Disowned* as the composition of early youth, written while the author was deep in studying metaphysics and ethics; out of those studies grew the character of Algernon Mordaunt, who typifies the heroism of Christian philosophy, combining as he does love and knowledge, placed in the midst of a sorrow and labouring on through the pilgrimage of life strong in the fortitude which comes from belief in heaven.

The more prosaic side of this hero is a proud nature, struggling with a poverty whose bitterness is increased by the impossibility of sheltering from it the wife for whose sake it was borne. The disowned himself, Clarence Linden, personifies what had been endured by the author in the difficulties with his mother, throughout the confused series of misunderstandings, of alleged affronts, of unhappiness, endured or inflicted on both sides. The vivid colouring throughout this portion of the work arises from the author's having suffered most of what he describes. This was perceived by no one more fully and quickly than by his mother. More, perhaps, than any other single cause, the book promoted the earliest reconciliation of Mrs. Bulwer-Lytton to her son.

The character providing the title for this story is less prominently its leading personage, and has in him less of Bulwer himself than the philosophic and ethical paragon Mordaunt. For the rest, the book was designed rather for presenting abstract qualities in the guise of human beings than primarily as a study in real life. Far more than was the case with *Falkland*, the *Disowned* largely reproduces, as its author insisted, the philosophic methods of *Wilhelm Meister*. Nor less truly might it be called a revival, in narrative form, of the old mystery or miracle plays. The influence of dispositions on conduct, rather than the narrative of a single hero's vicissitudes, was the task primarily set himself by the author. Among the lesser personages Warner, the would-be ambassador, is only ambition incarnate. In the same way Talbot is but an alias for vanity. Then there are the personified qualities with whose presentation more special care had been taken. Of these, Mordaunt himself is philanthropy,—the being whose noble attributes are brought out into stronger relief by their contrast with the criminal Crawford's selfishness and sensuality. Not that the book lacks descriptions of social and fashionable

realism. Clarence Linden, the titular hero of the story, is distinguished, not only by his appreciation of the noble and elevated Mordaunt, but by his own aptitude for practical life. The congenial employment of these gifts in politics and diplomacy naturally leads to descriptions of foreign or domestic statesmanship that Bulwer could give from life, and that to most readers formed the chief interest of the work.

If Mordaunt be the author's idealized self-portrait, the villain Crawfurd is drawn from the earliest and most widely notorious of contemporary felons. Had the book been written in the twentieth instead of the nineteenth century, Crawfurd would have appeared as a fraudulent company-floater like Jabez Balfour or Whitaker Wright, instead of as a banker. This banker in real life was Fauntleroy, whose vast appropriations of his customers' money and securities had reached in one year the sum of nearly £200,000; acquiring a reputation for religious fervour and purity of life, he had practised all the vices of the worst Roman emperors, had lived in splendour, had exercised princely hospitalities, and, in 1824, had been hung for forgery. His excesses had, he declared, been resorted to to allay torments of conscience that set in directly his course of crime began. The noise and laughter of many guests, and the illumination of his banqueting-rooms, alone, he said, administered something like an anodyne to the pangs of the never-dying worm and the perpetual fire that preyed upon his whole spiritual being. One more autobiographical touch in the *Disowned* requires special mention. Mordaunt calls the love of true glory the most legitimate agent of extensive good; ambition with him had been the stepping-stone to philanthropy. When he had lost the one being he loved, the happiness of others certainly impressed itself on Mordaunt as what might still make life worth living. These are very much the conceptions first

entering into Bulwer himself at the graveside of his Ealing sweetheart, and afterwards animating his preparation for the service which he determined at Woodcote should be rendered by his pen to his age.

One of the earliest occasions on which I can recollect being in Lord Lytton's company was when he presided at the send-off dinner to Dickens on leaving England for the American reading-tour in the November of 1867. The toast of the evening had been given ; certain of the diners were invited to draw near the chairman at his end of the long table. Of these the best-known whom I can now recall was George Augustus Sala. Through the good offices of a family friend, John Forster, the present writer, though then in the earliest days of his London work, was another. A turn in the talk towards the literary conditions of the eighteenth century gave Sala the opportunity of displaying his anecdotal memories of that period. In the novel immediately following the *Disowned—Devereux*—Richard Cromwell, as Sala reminded the author, is met for a few minutes by the hero in a Hertfordshire lane. "Do you know, Lord Lytton," said Sala, what happened to the ex-Protector when, from his retirement in the home counties, he once penetrated to the building then occupied by the peers at Westminster, taking his place with other strangers at the end of the building, opposite the official seat which he had filled during the six months of active succession to his father, the great Oliver ? "Pray, sir," said another looker-on to the former head of the Commonwealth, "have you recently before visited this chamber ?" "Not," with something between a sigh and a laugh came in a deep guttural voice the answer, "since I was last in that chair." The chairman had not heard the story, "and," he pleasantly added, "if I had known in time enough, I should certainly have put it into *Devereux*."

As has been already mentioned, in one of the moments

of restless dejection then frequent with him, Bulwer, while staying in Paris, had told Mrs. Cunningham he thought of a journey to Russia, that he might collect local colour for an historical novel he expected shortly to have on the stocks. The journey, we know, was never made, except, indeed, in imagination and by reading. The fiction for whose sake he meditated an extension of his travels eventually appeared soon after the *Disowned*, late in 1829 or early in 1830. This, his earliest historical romance, was inspired by the influence of Sir Walter Scott, as *Falkland* had reflected ideas associating themselves both with Byron and Goethe, and as *Pelham* had been written to show publishers and readers with how much more point, force, and cleverness generally than any of his contemporaries, its author could hit off and satirize the fashionable foibles and personalities of the time. The Queen Anne period, as that of English literature's Augustan age, possessed the same kind of attraction for Bulwer as *Esmond* and the *Virginians* show it to have had for Thackeray. Between, however, either of these novels and *Devereux*, there is not more in common than in the historical romance as handled respectively by Scott and Bulwer himself. To Scott historic and legendary scenes, incidents and characters were so much raw material to be worked up by his plastic genius into whatever form suited him best. If the actualities, whether of human beings or of events, recorded by the ancient chroniclers, were not what Scott would have wished them to be, he recreated them to suit his literary need. In his minute description of Waverley Scott at once showed himself a master in the analysis of character. Generally, however, he was concerned less with examining thought than with depicting action. If the author of *Ivanhoe* had taken up the subject of *Devereux*, a complete and living panorama of the time would have formed the natural and animated background of the story. The social habits and

the human representatives of the time would have woven themselves into the incidents of the narrative like the threads that form the pictures in tapestry. Among the celebrities described in *Devereux*, Bulwer had studied the career and personality of St. John Viscount Bolingbroke with the minutest care. The portrait of that master of English prose given in the novel, if a little stiff, represents him pretty well as he appeared to his contemporaries. Better still than the likeness are the ingenious memoranda for one of those speeches from the English Alcibiades whose unreported orations Chatham, who personally disliked and distrusted his character, said if recovered would be of more interest and value than the missing books of Livy or Tacitus. Bulwer's motive in choosing the Queen Anne period for his fourth novel was not any exceptional intimacy with the time, with which, indeed, he was a good deal less familiar than with the Plantagenet or Tudor epochs. He wisely wished to avoid repeating himself. He could not, he thought, at present safely work further the vein struck by him in *Pelham* and the *Disowned*. To get up a subject he knew there was no better plan than after new preparations to take in hand a book about it. He had done his reading for *Devereux* in 1826. Neither then, however, nor afterwards did he artistically assimilate his materials or succeed in fitting to an eighteenth-century environment, as was done by Thackeray in *Esmond*, a central character typically characteristic and redolent of the age. Nor did he make any pretence of doing so, or deny that with all his stirring adventures, the hero of this novel was an anachronism. On the contrary, in his dedication of the book to John Auldjo, he admits his *Devereux*, though supposed to have been flourishing in the eighteenth century, to be in respect of mind and sentiment, essentially a child of the nineteenth. The fiction, he allows, deals less with the picturesque than with the real. *Devereux* as a fact is a novel in little more

than name ; the form of its narrative is, as in the case of *Falkland* and *Pelham*, autobiographical. Both those earlier efforts, however, were works of imagination with the personages described in them more or less dramatically grouped and connected through the incidents of the story by the uniting agency of a cohesive plot. In *Devereux* the movement and interest grow out of and are centred round the machinations of an unscrupulous and self-seeking churchman. The Abbé Montreuil's intrigues run through the story, and are the agency which brings together the episodes and individuals described. Indeed, but for the ecclesiastic's thwarted villainies, the book, instead of a novel, would be a popular version of foreign and domestic affairs written by a well-placed observer under the last Stuart sovereign. The sole character in whom some touches may have been taken from life is the ecclesiastic Montreuil ; between him, however, and Bulwer's early Paris friend the Abbé Kinsela, the resemblance is one of clerical style rather than of personal character. In real life the Abbé Kinsela had, perhaps, rather officiously overwhelmed Bulwer with good offices on the occasion of his first appearance in Paris. In fiction the Abbé Montreuil appeared as the evil genius of the autobiographer. Still, notwithstanding these contrasts, John Forster may have had some reason for recognizing in the ecclesiastic of the novel many features belonging to the amiable and astute churchman whose acquaintance had first been made abroad by the author at the same time that he became acquainted with Mrs. Cunningham. After 1825, Kinsela dropped entirely out of Bulwer's life. What more likely than that the Irish Jesuit, baffled in his personal designs on Bulwer, had afterwards become his enemy ? Already Bulwer had wounded him by declining the Roman Catholic wife Kinsela had chosen for him. That failure may not have prevented Kinsela from still trying to direct the lines of the clever and well-placed young Englishman's

career. The miscarriage of such a design might well have transformed the Celtic priest's friendship into enmity. The other possible touch of self-history in *Devereux* may be seen in the overmastering of fraternal sentiment by rival interest. Edward Bulwer's father, it has been said, wished to incorporate his wife's Hertfordshire property into his own Norfolk estate. This Mrs. Lytton-Bulwer had determined should never be done. Knebworth was not entailed; she could bequeath it to any one she chose. Her eldest son inherited his father's views on the subject. Neither to him nor to either of his brothers did the lady ever give a hint about the intended disposition of her Hertfordshire acres. For some years, therefore, the brothers William, Henry, and Edward Bulwer were engaged in a triangular competition for the Knebworth reversion, quite *à la Devereux*. Bulwer's choice of the seventeenth century for his first historical novel rather than the incidents and personages two hundred years earlier was due to an accident; he had mislaid the notes, long before prepared for the *Last of the Barons*; he was working against time and could not stay to find them. Though suffering from haste in composition, *Devereux* fulfilled its author's fondest expectations. It proved the most promptly, importantly, and favourably reviewed of all his novels up to this time, and the critics were unanimous in considering it an entirely admirable effort to support and improve his public fame. They also declared it to be far beyond anything he had yet given promise of doing,—a sensible book and a wise one, its fancies brilliant, its thoughts deep, its observations true.

In 1830 *Devereux* was followed by the novel which first brought upon Bulwer the charge of unworthily pandering to the taste in fiction for the felonious. Some years before *Devereux's* publication he had, indeed, led up to *Paul Clifford* by the introduction into *Pelham's* last pages of the swell mobsman, Job Johnson, whose acquaintance in the

flesh Bulwer owed to some of the old Bow Street runners. Here our author was considerably in advance of other novelists, who have found their characters and incidents among the outcast, if not criminal orders. William Godwin's exposure in *Caleb Williams* of legalized and domestic oppression had been published, indeed, before the close of the eighteenth century, but in the case of those writers nearer his own time with whom Bulwer is often compared, Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* came out in 1838. In the previous year Dickens had published *Oliver Twist*; and the literary appetite for the romance of low life was not gratified by Charles Kingsley in *Alton Locke* till 1850, nor till 1856 by Charles Reade in *It is Never too Late to Mend*. Among nineteenth-century writers, therefore, the example of acquainting by the novel one half of the world as to how the other half lived was first set by Bulwer in those stories which immediately followed the *Disowned*. His youthful indignation had been aroused by the revelation of prison scandals and the promiscuous destruction of human life which during his earlier years formed part of our criminal system. Romilly's humanitarian labours were followed by young Bulwer with the closest sympathy. While he had been reading with private tutors for Cambridge, capital punishment might be the sentence for more than two hundred offences. These crimes included pocket-picking, a theft of five shillings from a shop, the stealing of a single fish, the robbing of a rabbit warren, the cutting down of a tree, the personation of a Greenwich pensioner.* The opposition delaying Romilly's removal of these barbarities from the Statute Book proceeded from the Upper House generally, in particular from Eldon, then Lord Chancellor, from Ellenborough, and from the bench of bishops. The spiritual and temporal peers agreed that the mitigation of penalties already granted had increased the number of

* Walpole's *History of England*, II, p. 132.

pickpockets and other professional thieves. *Paul Clifford* is an argument to show not only the possibility, but the expediency of reforming the criminal, as well as punishing in a way that deters the offender without degrading him. Degrees of depravity exist even among the occupants of thieves' kitchens. There is a stage with all of them in which the felon actual or potential may be redeemed and kept from becoming a burden to the State and be converted into a capable, if not, as proved the destiny of Clifford, a beneficent citizen. Moreover, human nature is an affair not less complex in habitual rebels against law than in its most obedient subjects. Elements of good can be found in an atmosphere of moral poison, and the germs of a cultivable intelligence among the associates of harlots and thieves. The State's first duty is to economize all human material available for its service. Thus, instead of denouncing or ignoring those born and nurtured in dens of infamy, our rulers should think at least as much of redeeming and improving life as of destroying it. That conviction animated Romilly and his colleagues ; its influence operated with Bulwer throughout the whole planning and writing of *Paul Clifford*. To a great extent, therefore, the book is an imaginative commentary on the efforts of those law reformers whose labours had advanced some way before the first of the criminal novels saw the light. One effect of the bitter Tory resistance to Romilly and Mackintosh was that Bulwer began parliamentary life on the Radical side. Just ten years before *Paul Clifford* appeared public opinion declared in favour of the principles advocated by the novel. Castlereagh's opposition was broken down ; Mackintosh gained his Select Committee for enquiring into the penal laws of all kinds as well as into prison discipline and the expediency of carefully classifying prisoners. Indiscriminate hanging had robbed the death penalty of its disgrace. Another institution

tending to harden the guilty and to brutalize the innocent, existing till 1819, was the savage rite called "wager of battel"; a man had been murdered; his wife or next heir might within a year and a day of the crime's commission "appeal" the suspected murderer before a judge. The "appealed" person, after the hearing of the case in the Court of Common Pleas, could deliver to his appellant "wager of battel." The judges in their robes met at some place near the court, and presented the two combatants with a short thick staff and a leather shield. Thus equipped, the two parties cudgelled each other till one signalled his defeat by uttering the word "craven." Bulwer has been misrepresented as advocating the repeal of capital punishment. He only aimed, in common with Dickens and Thackeray, at abolishing public executions and at rendering more awful, by its very rareness, the shedding of man's blood, which had been pronounced by Lord Eldon so sure a preventive of offences that no substitute for it could be suggested, or was even conceivable by the mind of man.

Hanoverian Toryism generally inclined to that opinion of the most stern and authentic among its legal representatives; social, industrial and economic subjects preoccupied the masses; and the popular pendulum seemed in danger of swinging round from zeal for Romilly's philanthropic projects to acquiescence in what remained of the cruel dispensation which those beneficent schemes were attempts to supersede. Such was the reaction which *Paul Clifford* undoubtedly helped to arrest. On the whole criminal question—in essays, articles, speeches, as well as in his novels—Bulwer combined humane feeling with sound common sense. So far from being a total abolitionist of the death penalty, he was the first Englishman to import into the discussion the words of the French wit, "Que messieurs les assassins commencent." His objections began and ended with the infatuated severity which hardened all

and improved none. Our prisons and houses of correction, he argued, become mere felon manufactories when, without thought of moral amelioration or difference of degree in guilt, offenders of every variety and age work out their sentence together. The first meeting for improving prisons and for classifying their inmates had been convened by Sir T. Fowell-Buxton some eight years before *Pelham* appeared, but not before Bulwer, still a mere lad, had placed himself in communication on the subject with Buxton and his friends.

Paul Clifford's success was, however, due not to its author's philanthropic purpose, but to the daring verisimilitude at once seen in its portraits of originals celebrated in Church and State, all, for the purposes of this book, in the guise of highwaymen, cut-throats, and footpads. Since Gay's lampoon on the Treasury Bench in the *Beggar's Opera* neither on the stage nor in letters had anything secured a wider or more immediate success than the caricatures contained in *Paul Clifford*, of the judges and legislators who, instead of being a terror to evil-doers, were now turned into their laughing-stock. Among the earliest to congratulate the author on his new hit were not only William Godwin, who had encouraged Bulwer to the effort, but others equally distinguished and differing so widely from each other as Ebenezer Elliott the corn-law rhymers, Jeremy Bentham, and the future Lord Beaconsfield's father, Isaac Disraeli. The august ornaments of Bench and Bar travestied in this story had the good sense to join in the laugh at their own expense. The only enemies made to its author by the book were certain men of letters presently to be mentioned. It was, without mentioning his name, dedicated to Bulwer's old Cambridge friend Cockburn, in a curiously worded preface. This explained how the author shrank from compromising his Trinity Hall intimate in his legal career by associating his full patronymic with a work of this sort ; and put clearly enough what was uppermost in his mind

when he planned the book. He had been struck by the contrast between the conventional frauds received as component parts of modern civilization, and the invasion of those laws distinguishing between *meum* and *tuum*. Masses of our fellow-creatures, the victims of fate or chance beyond their own control, are contaminated in infancy by the example of parents. Their conscience is stifled in ignorance, or perverted to apologies for vice. The child who is cradled in ignominy has the felon for his schoolmaster, the house of correction for his academy. Breathing there an atmosphere in which virtue is poisoned, and to which religion does not pierce, he becomes less a responsible and reasoning being than a wild beast, suffered to range in the wilderness till it prowls near our homes and we kill it in self-defence. Further, Bulwer called the book a study in the philosophy of circumstance. By this he means that under a highly artificial and complex civilization, the difference separating good from bad is often but an accident. Thus, in the novel now spoken of, who can honestly call the dispenser of the law, the honoured father and judge, William Brandon, a better man than the outcast of the law, the felon confronting him at the convict's bar, Paul Clifford? William Cobbett's *English Grammar* had been published some ten years before *Paul Clifford* appeared. Among the ludicrous examples given in that grammar of nouns of quantity were "House of Commons," "den of thieves." The absurd juxtaposition raised many a laugh in London clubs and college common-rooms. It was shown to Bulwer by Edward Villiers, a Fellow of Merton, nearly related to his earlier friend of that name. "Well," said Bulwer, "I think I can illustrate and expand that idea; though as a fact Godwin suggested to me some time since, and consequently years ago set me on thinking whether one might not adapt the *Beggar's Opera* of Gay to our own state. If, however, Godwin's notion had been literally acted on, the result

would have been failure ; for the tame and inadequate title he proposed was *Masks and Faces*, while there would have been nothing in the nature of the popular interest arising from a sustained plot."

Godwin's hints were no doubt incidentally worked into the book, but supplied neither its groundwork nor its chief features. *Paul Clifford's* central idea is conveyed, and its keynote sounded, in Chapter XVIII, where Augustus Tomlinson, who eventually settles down as a "moderate Whig," moved that Paul Lovett (Clifford) should be again chosen as the thieves' captain. "Our body," he adds, "has long been divided into two factions, each jealous of the other, and each emulous which shall put the greater number of fingers into the public pie." "In the language of the vulgar," continues Tomlinson, "one faction would be called swindlers, and the other highwaymen." Tomlinson, however, who is a bit of a politician, and fond of finding new names, calls the one Whigs and the other Tories. Of the Tories Mr. Tomlinson is esteemed an influential member ; of the Whigs, a fellow-thief, Mr. Bags, is a shining ornament. The names, by the by, were in every case of Bulwer's coining. Godwin's inspiration had amounted to nothing more than that, as by Gay in 1727, so by Bulwer a hundred years later, political celebrities should be represented as professional criminals. So far from offence being taken by the reputed prototypes of the *Paul Clifford* characters, famous personages hastened to prove their identification with them. "Gentleman George" was of course His then reigning Majesty, the former Prince Regent, the noted head of a flash public-house in the country, the best-spoken man in the trade, a very handsome fellow in his youth, but a little too fond of his glass and his bottle to please his father, a staid old gentleman who on Sundays walked about with a bob wig and a gold-headed cane, and who on weekdays was a much better farmer than head of a public-house.

"Gentleman George" was a nice, kind-hearted man in many things, his chief fault being that he was a little too fond of seeing his friends drunk.

Then there was George's brother, "to carry on the business afterwards"—"Mariner Bill" or "Bill Squareyards" as we call him. Near to George stood a thin, military-looking fellow in a shabby riding-coat, with a commanding, bold, aquiline countenance a little the worse for wear. "Fighting Atty" we call him (the Duke of Wellington), a devil on the road. "Halt, deliver, must, shall!" "Can't, shan't!" "Do as I bid you, or go to the devil!" "Fighting Atty" was attended by "the sallow gentleman" (Mr. Huskisson). Opposite to these were various frequenters of Whig drawing-rooms, "All-Fair" (Lord Alvanley), "Batchelor Bill" (the Duke of Devonshire, so pleased, by the by, at the caricature, that he left his card on Bulwer, inscribing it with his nickname). In the book "Bill" is described as "of Devonshire extraction, inheriting from his mother the pleasantest public-house in town, and the greatest popularity." "Old Bags" got his name from having once been a lawyer's foot-boy. Burlesquing, in his talk and person, the reactionary Tory Lord Eldon, he almost weeps outright when he thinks a little time hence Hounslow will be safe, Finchley secure, and a man may go from Lunnon to John o' Groats "without losing a penny by one of us." Every blade of corn made to grow on a common is an encroachment on the rights of us gentlemen highwaymen. "Long Ned" was Lord Ellenborough, "Scarlet Jem" Sir James Scarlett. "It was edifying," is the author's comment, "to hear the rascals. So nice was their language, so honest their enthusiasm for their own interests, that you might have imagined you heard a coterie of Cabinet Ministers conferring on taxes or debating about their own perquisites." In one quarter only, as has been already said, was real offence given by *Paul Clifford*.

That originated in the following manner. *Devereux*, published a little before *Paul Clifford*, had been noticed by the *Athenæum* less appreciatively than its author thought he deserved. At the same time in talking or writing to a friend Bulwer spoke of critics, Scotchmen, enemies, all so far as he was concerned being one and the same thing. Why he should have associated with literary adventurers from beyond the Tweed the weekly journal of letters, art and science is not clear. *The Athenæum* (*Paul Clifford's* Asinæum) was founded by a Cornishman, Silk Buckingham, and in Bulwer's day was owned and edited by a London man of letters, Charles Wentworth Dilke, who had been at Trinity Hall with Bulwer.* Quite possibly, however, the reference was less to Mr. Dilke's paper than to the clever, needy young Scots then successfully invading the metropolitan press, "not single spies, but in battalions." At that time both the great quarterly reviews made a feature of short, snappish book notices, written, as Bulwer assumed, by these hungry Highlanders for the *Edinburgh* under Macvey Napier, for the *Quarterly* under Lockhart. Peter McGrawler, whose editorial den is in Whitechapel or St. Giles', symbolized in his own person the aggressive hordes of journalists from the far north who tried to avenge Flodden by the wholesale assassination of Sassenach writers. The literary interludes between Macvey Napier or Lockhart and Scott will be mentioned presently. Here it is enough to say that the Asinæum burlesque in *Paul Clifford* naturally produced at the time an estrangement between Bulwer and Dilke. The difference, however, was fully composed before the death of either. The two co-operated cordially afterwards in undertakings for the common good of the literary calling. As regards the others, whose personal or patriotic sensibilities he had wounded by the literary skit, some

* The first Sir Charles Dilke, Bulwer's contemporary at Trinity Hall, was associated with his father, the famous critic, in the ownership and management of the *Athenæum* from 1830 to 1846.

coldness lingered between Napier, Lockhart, and himself, but not enough to prevent Bulwer's copious contributions to both the quarterlies. The *Edinburgh* editor, when suggesting an article to him, humorously deprecates the application to himself of the anti-Scotch scourge, and respectfully wants to know whether a favourable article by a Scotchman about Bulwer's books would be less or more welcome to him than an unfavourable article by an Englishman.

Nothing in the sadness of existence touched Bulwer more deeply than the human ruins through which, as he advanced in life, he found his path more and more to lie. The scene, he said, became increasingly a wilderness of opportunities missed and of energies abused. The intelligence and exertions that, wrongly employed, brought a man to the hulks or the gallows, would, if under wise counsel directed aright, have led him to comfort, perhaps to affluence, and to a name fair, perhaps distinguished. Bulwer did not suppose that government, however grandmotherly, could absolutely prevent the wreckage of humanity depicted not only in *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*, but in episodes and incidents of his other novels—*Lucretia*, *Night and Morning*, *What Will He Do With It?* He felt, on the other hand, that a good deal more might be done, both by public and individual effort, to promote those habits and opinions among all orders tending to check the wholesale waste of bodies and souls. Palliate, was his motto, if you cannot cure. It was thus as an earnest worker in the field of social reform that Bulwer, during 1830, resolved to lose no further time before going into Parliament. The economical and moral, not less than the political, questions of the time had been by sheer industry thoroughly mastered. Meanwhile his message as a writer had been delivered in a series of what were practically lay sermons on the pursuit of the social virtues for the improvement of character and the brightening of daily life. To that class of compositions belonged

the essay on the use of money already mentioned in these pages, and, though not published till some time later, first put into shape during the Woodcot days. Thoughts of the same kind were shortly afterwards to engage the greatest of Bulwer's contemporaries, Charles Dickens. "Human dry rot" formed the theme, if not the title, of a paper written by that novelist himself, enforcing, less didactically, indeed, but even more earnestly than Bulwer, the main precepts in Essay VII of the *Caxtoniana* series.

The miscarriage of so much potential excellence, or at least merit, in his fellow-creatures was no mere philanthropic fancy; it had been illustrated to him by the experience which he called one of the few investments he had made without finding reason to regret. Bulwer, like his friend Disraeli, had wandered on foot through many parts of England, mixing familiarly with all sorts and conditions of men. Amongst the acquaintances thus made in the year, it would seem, of the gypsy adventure already recounted was that of a Midland mechanic who lives while these lines are being written, and who is a fair specimen of the not inconsiderable class of working-men that have found in Bulwer as trusted and inspiring a teacher as Carlyle or Mill. "Picture to yourself," once wrote the person now mentioned to Bulwer, "a man, sensible that he is made for something better than to labour and to die, cursed with the desire for knowledge, occupied only with the task to live, drudging on from year to year, if haply by and by he may be raised above drudgery's need." This reflective toiler with his hands had his counterparts among his superiors. The polite world more and more struck Bulwer as consisting of only two classes, the borers and the bored. In this free and prosperous country, wrote the Caxton Essayist, all society had become a court, because the rich and idle who composed it were as kings; we pass our lives seeking to amuse those who cannot be amused, or

in looking for amusement from others who cannot amuse us. "Over the base of the mountain the fogs gather dull and cheerless, the air at the summit withers and exhausts." * Thus the wise economy of money went, in Bulwer's mind, with the economy of the material and opportunities of life. By close observation of life and character on all social levels, in all aspects of his time; by perfecting himself in the accumulated wisdom of the world's greatest teachers, and by the conscientious meditation in his laborious solitude upon the problems of his time, Bulwer had qualified himself for the office of popular teacher. Neither hard work nor sense of responsibility had been shirked in preparing the two stories of crime that preceded his entrance into Parliament. The earlier of those books, *Paul Clifford*, had shown, with an exuberance of satire, the thin partition dividing felonious sharpness in the law-breakers from lofty wisdom in the statesmen. What was the question suggested by this contrast but the accident of birth and opportunity prevented the criminals from being peers of Parliament, and the judges inmates of Mrs. Lobkin's cellars? *Eugene Aram* appeared nearly two years later than *Paul Clifford*. Its sombreness is unrelieved by any of the sprightly facetiæ enlivening the earlier novel. Thomas Hood's *Dream of Eugene Aram* (1829) made Bulwer regret not having anticipated by his prose romance the verses whose subject had been familiar to him from childhood. Here it is interesting to point out that Bulwer, while in no way indebted to Hood either for the subject or its treatment, had been deeply impressed by Hood's few lines of prose introduction to the verses on their coming out in the *Gem* (annual). These words of the poet describe a presentation in a dream of the mighty agonies endured by blood-guilty souls tortured "on the supernatural racks of sleep." Profoundly impressed by that delineation of a conscience branded with

* *The Student*, p. 145.

the mark of Cain, Bulwer embodied it some years later in a narrative sketch, *Monos and Daimonos*, republished in the *Student*.* That piece may have been suggested by, if it did not rather itself inspire, E. A. Poe's *William Wilson*. The official record of the crime supplied Bulwer with all the Aram details needed for his novel which his earliest literary adviser, Godwin, had urged him to write. The novelist, however, had other knowledge of the subject than this. The Eugene Aram of real life had, as already mentioned in the proper place, been engaged by Bulwer's grandfather (the "Justice") to give his daughters occasional instruction in their schoolroom at Heydon Hall. Moreover, among the pupils at the King's Lynn school where Aram was usher had been a boy afterwards distinguished as Admiral Burney; with him Bulwer, perhaps on Thomas Hood's suggestion, placed himself in communication. The whole account of Eugene Aram's relations with the Lester family in the romance was taken word for word, fact for fact, from Burney's notes.† Bulwer's real inspiration was yielded by the undoubted tragedy of Aram's experiences. Poverty, bordering upon starvation, a mind preternaturally active, severe illness, intense brain labour,—here is enough to explain abnormal accessibility to Satanic suggestions. Genius without hope, knowledge without fruit, formed the material on which the Fiend can be sure of acting if the victim falters but for a moment. Such were the facts, not sought out by Bulwer, but forced upon him. The murder brought home to Aram, for the time absorbed popular interest. Newspaper readers were divided into two parties by the crime. Some saw in him merely the brutal assassin, whose alleged love of books and thirst of knowledge were but hypocrisy. Others regarded him as a common criminal, who murdered not to supply his own necessities, but to

* "Knebworth" edition, p. 27.

† Hood's preface to *Dream of Eugene Aram*, Vol. II, p. 283, Moxon edition.

gratify a vile vindictiveness. About the same time an incident with some likeness to the Eugene Aram case happened in Spain. A barbarous assassination had been committed by a priest, with, as it came out pretty clearly in the evidence, no motive for the crime but a passion for learning, impossible to be gratified from want of money to buy books and to inspect manuscripts. No details of the Spanish murder were incorporated in the novel of *Eugene Aram*. What, however, had happened abroad gave fresh actuality to the subject, created a popular interest in the homicide, distinguished from ordinary felons by intellectual tastes if not virtuous instincts. Such apologies for capital crime were not quite as new as they seem to have been thought at the time. More than half a century earlier no less severe a moralist than Samuel Johnson, à propos of the forged bond for which he was about to be executed, had written to Dr. Dodd, "Your crime morally or religiously considered has no very deep dye of turpitude; it corrupted no man's principles. It evolved only a temporary and reparable injury." After *Eugene Aram* no variety of homicide appears in Bulwer's novels till *Lucretia*, 1846. Before that, however, had appeared a fresh batch of eleven novels. These included some of his best-known works, and the list opens with *Godolphin*. That story had been begun by its writer before completing his thirtieth year; its composition kept pace in progress with *Eugene Aram*. It had, indeed, been undertaken as a relief to Bulwer's mind from the tragic associations of his second fiction dealing with felony. By this time Bulwer had begun classifying his stories as novels of life and of manners. Another and even more appropriate division for his earlier romances would be into those of sentiment and those of crime. Schiller, about whom at a later date than that now reached Bulwer was to write so well, regretted the impulse given to fiction by his *Robbers*. Bulwer had no exemption from misgivings of the same kind on

surveying his position after the publication of *Eugene Aram*. In *Godolphin* he turned from the harrowing and, as he had himself begun to think, unprofitable account of human wreckage, of potential virtue degraded into actual vice, of lives and abilities that might have been blessings to their age poisoned by vile companionship, or extinguished by the hangman's noose. In this his first published work, after he had entered Parliament, love with the silver bow appears as the genius of young romance, inspires the rhapsodies luxuriating in a wealth of capital letters, and casts a spell over youthful readers because the writer sympathizes so evidently and so fully with the glow, the thrill of life, and discharges from the fountain of his mind such an abundant stream of generous, sweet, and wholesome thoughts. Hence arises one among the chief distinctions between the writings of his youth on the one hand, and of his maturity or age on the other. The two periods may be divided by the *Pilgrims of the Rhine*. After that work, the minor key is more uniformly distinguishable than before. Pessimism, except of the superficially cynical and humorous kind, there may not be. But from 1835 onwards the tone dominating his work is one of subdued melancholy.

The interest and importance of *Godolphin* lie in the fact that it forms in some respects a link between the earlier stories of fashion, like *Pelham*, and the later narratives, whose atmosphere is charged so heavily with the supernatural, like *Zanoni*. *Godolphin* embodies the poetic temperament of which *Pelham*, the man of action, has nothing. He is an idealist not devoid of real power, but run hopelessly to seed by a confirmed habit of intellectual trifling. Bulwer's father, it will be remembered, had hoped to receive the title of Lord St. Erpingham. The introduction of that particular style into Chapter XI disposes one to look for autobiographical memories of family associations. Some of these may actually be found in the memories

of the brilliant début made by Lady Erpingham's daughter Constance. Here is an undoubted reference to Warburton Lytton's daughter, Bulwer's mother, as she appeared in her first London season. After this the transition is quick to the conventional descriptions of smart London in the Regency period. These, of course, are in the *Pelham* vein, but without the *Pelham* freshness* and point because they have not the *Pelham* personality. Pains are evidently taken to produce a sense of harmony between the chief figure in the work, who gives it its title, and the smaller personages about it. From this group Lucilla alone stands out clearly, less because of any special skill in her delineation than from the fact of her connection with the animal magnetism whose note for the first time is sounded in this story. Among any other hints of the supernatural in *Godolphin* may be noticed what reads like a presage of the fairy folk-lore so largely appearing a year or two later in the *Pilgrims of the Rhine*. The entrance to Godolphin's house is an oak door studded with nails. The bell, embedded among leaves, has a ghostly sound, that makes it a tocsin to the elvish hordes which human footsteps disturb. Lady Caroline Lamb, though celebrated by Bulwer in many novels not carried beyond the manuscript stage, appears in none of his published stories except *Godolphin*. Here the centre of a little group of dandies from Watier's club, she figures as a lady of forty-five, who lisps out comments, half sentimental, half cynical, about the pretty voice and good ankles of a new actress. That done, she amuses herself in making love to the hero of the book, whom she calls Percy, because there can be no harm in such a mere boy.

* Of all his novels, *Zanoni*, as is elsewhere said in the text, may have pleased him best, but about his first success in fiction his words were: "My extreme sensibility to all that was new about me on entering life, gave *Pelham* a charm approached by nothing else I have written."

CHAPTER VIII

THE LITERARY AND POLITICAL PLATFORMS GAINED

Bulwer's gradual reconciliation with his mother—Irritability caused by bodily ills and critics' personalities—Bitter attacks of Lockhart, Thackeray, and their followers—Bulwer between two fires—Editorship of the *New Monthly*, afterwards the organ of his most effective replies to his assailants—Reconciliation with literary critics—He becomes M.P. for St. Ives—A retrospect—The political situation—Causes of the widespread distress—Discontent at the universal misery is followed by a demand for Reform, which obtains Bulwer's support—Bulwer, Tom Paine, and the dukes—On a representative system that only represents peers—His opposition to official Whiggism—Henry Bulwer precedes his brother to St. Stephen's—Mrs. Lytton's anger—Her son as an extreme Radical—A shock to the peers—Bulwer's study of foreign history and politics—His desire to impart to his countrymen the principles of a practical cosmopolitanism—A comparison of the social systems of England and France—Edward Bulwer's political independence—Bulwer as Disraeli's patron and sponsor—The latter's love of ornament not less in his writing than in his dress.

TO Bulwer in his private life and personal relations nothing during the earliest portion of his London residence was of more importance than the reconciliation with his mother. The process eventually became complete ; it was only rendered gradually difficult by the continued readiness on the part both of mother and son to take offence on the slightest revival of the questions which had originally separated them. An abnormal touchiness and a morbid pride long remained the cause of friction. Till Mrs. Lytton had retracted the unfavourable opinion she had expressed about her daughter-in-law, Edward Bulwer could not from his heart forgive her. He even refused her the privilege of presenting him as a free gift with the money required to defray the cost of settling in a fashionable and expensive London quarter. He was, however, compelled to sacrifice his independence by accepting as a loan from Knebworth the money wherewith to pay Nash's bills for

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 181

the beautified Mayfair dwelling, with its show-room shaped and, to the minutest detail, fitted up exactly to resemble an apartment in classical Pompeii. The finishing touches to this apartment were not given till after the later Pompeian excavations in the sixties ; but thirty years earlier it had been advanced far enough to excite the admiration of one among Bulwer's first visitors in Mayfair,—Byron's sister, Ada Augusta Leigh, whom on her earliest call Mrs. Bulwer describes as “an altogether nice ladylike woman though very ugly.” The depression of spirits from which now, as throughout his life, he suffered severely, had for its chief cause no anxiety about money ; of that he could have been relieved in great part by being able to draw on his mother for any sum he wanted, whether in the way of loan or gift. The real causes of his trouble were partly physical, but to a much greater degree moral. The Hertford Street dinner-parties had become events in the London season. All the celebrities, literary or political, of the time—John Forster, Washington Irving, Benjamin Disraeli, and Macaulay—were seldom absent ; to these was occasionally added the most charming and graceful comedian of the day, Charles James Mathews, whose impersonation of Sir Charles Coldstream in *Used Up* might, as many thought, have at points been studied from Bulwer himself ; for in Bulwer at this time there was the same union of the languid manner and the indolent drawl with the latent courage and fire as in the actor's delineation of Coldstream. By this time, whatever his irritation of mind and discomfort of body, Bulwer had, after long effort, schooled himself into concealing them under the calm exterior of a well-bred reserve. None of his guests except the chief—perhaps the only real friend of his own calling he cared to possess, Forster—knew, as he entered the room fresh from his valet's hands, and magnificently groomed, calm, debonair and cheery, what he had suffered from a certain cutaneous

trouble, from earache, and from the mosquito stings of unfriendly reviewers for hours before taking his place as host at the table. Not that Bulwer was really more intolerant of criticism than many other artists of pen or brush before and since his day. As a politician Bulwer never showed himself so vulnerable to attack or ridicule as did Canning and Peel. Among writers his sensibility had been far exceeded by Samuel Johnson, as it fell short of the resentment against their critics afterwards shown by Dickens, at a later date by George Eliot, above all by Bulwer's earliest censor, W. M. Thackeray. Again and again Macaulay told Bulwer that to let the critics disturb him was to wrong himself. Eventually his skin somewhat thickened, but in these earlier years the Press Aristarchus was the only person who could shake the presence of mind and moral fortitude that were always Bulwer's chief traits. Yet Bulwer never violated as audaciously as was done by Thackeray the laws of literary propriety conventionally insisted on by Tennyson's "Irresponsible, indolent Reviewers" of the Press. The kind of personality specially condemned by these on, it is said, Thackeray's authority was practised so systematically by no great writer as by Thackeray himself. The originals of the portraits in *Pelham* and *Paul Clifford* were public men. The prototype of Harry Foker in *Pendennis*—Andrew Arcdekne—was in no way public property, but a harmless private gentleman whom Thackeray only knew "in the sanctity of club life" from meeting him in the *Garrick*, but who had trodden on the novelist's toes by saying to him in the smoking-room after the first lecture on the English Humourists, "Thack, my boy, to have made your entertainment go better you ought to have had a pianner." Thackeray's mature and real opinion of Bulwer has been already given at the opening of this work. For some time, however, Thackeray's disparagement of Bulwer was so bitter, so persistent, and now and then so petty,

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 183

that had he himself been its subject he would have had something to say about "hitting below the belt." The onslaughts of Thackeray or his disciples in *Fraser's Magazine* on Bulwer form a chapter in "the quarrels of authors," whose details need not be dwelt on now. Thackeray, indeed, began to fall foul of Bulwer almost before he left Cambridge. Afterwards he used his connection with *Fraser's Magazine* first and in later years with *Punch* to banter Bulwer on representing the Old Bailey school of fiction. From Thackeray other of the *Fraser* writers took their cue; one of them parodied *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram* in a burlesque romance, *Elizabeth de Brownrigge*, its heroine being a notorious harridan of Fetter Lane, who had been charged by Canning in the *Anti-Jacobin* with whipping two female apprentices to death and hiding them in the coal hole. The next *Fraser* attack was from Thackeray's own pen, *Catherine, a Story*, pseudonymously attributed to Ikey Solomons, Junior. The most biting of the Thackerayan *jeux d'esprit* appeared several years later in *Punch* from the pen that had written *Vanity Fair*, under the title of *George de Barnwell*, with a stinging introduction about the Truthful and the Beautiful. Meanwhile there had been other girdings in *Fraser* at Bulwer, now politely described as a man who in his employer's back shop manufactured a novel at the shortest notice and at the lowest price, trading on his tolerable acquaintance with footmen and butlers, and who therefore made others think that they could write a fashionable novel also. These abusive scurrilities were afterwards regretted by no one more than by Thackeray himself, and Bulwer would have shown only common worldly wisdom in ignoring them. Base, paltry, grovelling twaddle was almost the mildest phrase in which the future author of the *Caxtons* was described by him who had still to write *Vanity Fair*. The highest authority in this matter, Leslie Stephen, has stated his reasons for thinking that a great deal of all

this was neither written by Thackeray himself nor with his approval and knowledge by others. Thackeray, too, was no more case-hardened against depreciatory comment than was Bulwer himself. One of Thackeray's toadies at the *Garrick* had repeated to him a conversational comparison between himself and Flaubert, much to the English writer's disadvantage, alleged to have been made by Bulwer. "Poor, thin, limited and local, by the Frenchman's side," were the epithets which, it was said, Bulwer had told Sir William Fraser were his rods in pickle for Thackeray. Had the two men in the thirties or forties known each other better, they would have gibed and snarled at each other less. Before either of them was many years older he had found in his rival much to appreciate and even admire. They were first brought personally together by one who had known them both at Cambridge and who sat in Parliament with Bulwer,—my own life-long friend, A. W. Kinglake, who described to me the reconciling dinner at the Athenæum. The good offices, however, subsequently uniting them in personal friendship were those of John Forster. Meeting him on the Leas at Folkestone in the early fifties, Thackeray said, "I may soon be making a trip to America ; before I go I should like Bulwer to know how deeply I regret my juvenile attacks on him, out of mere jealousy, in the *Yellow-plush Papers*."

The other literary quarrel fixed upon Bulwer by the success of his novels was with Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law, Lockhart, who united with his editorship of the *Quarterly Review* ambition to excel as a writer of fiction. *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, a caustic skit on Scotch society, had made his pen a terror to the Whigs. His novel, *Adam Blair*, had missed the success it really deserved while *Pelham* was running its triumphant course. The author of *Adam Blair* resented that as a grievance not only to his book, but to his political faith. Bulwer, indeed, had con-

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 185

trived to place himself between two fires,—one from those who envied his success, the other from those who disapproved his politics. Lockhart, a perfervidly patriotic Scot, had insisted on seeing in *Paul Clifford's* McGrawler-Asinæum episode not so much a caricature of English periodical critics as of the writers from beyond the Tweed, including himself, who then dominated the Southron Press. The competing novelist who edited the *Quarterly* would not pay Bulwer the compliment of denouncing him in an article all to himself, but, on the principle of any stick being good enough to beat a dog, chastised him indirectly in an article on J. J. Morier's romance, *Zohrab the Hostage*, which the *Quarterly* lauded as a model for aspirant romancists who wished to avoid contamination by *Pelham*. *Zohrab* was called by the *Quarterly* the best novel that had appeared for many years, out of sight superior to all the rest of the recent brood, a model to other writers for their study and imitation, just as the products of another pen, from *Pelham* to *Paul Clifford*, combined every fault possible for a novelist to display.

So far Bulwer's pen had been without an organ in which he could retort in his own way and at his own time upon all assailants. That opportunity he was now to have. The *New Monthly* magazine had been started in 1814 by his publisher Colburn to compete with *Blackwood* and *Fraser*. Its editorship, on the retirement of Thomas Campbell, the poet, was offered to Bulwer ; he accepted the position, not more because of his literary usefulness than for the service he thought it might render him in his parliamentary course now about to begin. He could trust his skilled editorial assistant, S. C. Hall, to relieve him of those duties which might interfere with his work either as author or politician. The first number under Bulwer's control appeared in November, 1831. His contemporaries gave no very cordial welcome to his enrolment in the list of London editors.

His friend Bowring's connection with the *Westminster Review* did not prevent that periodical a little later from denouncing him as being a member of an old Norfolk family, with such pride in his squirely associations as made him set up for a squirely novelist who could afford to be quite indifferent to what was said about him by the reviewers or thought by his fellow-writers of fiction. Meanwhile, how condescending of him to conduct a magazine just to show that so fine a gentleman as himself need not be ashamed of the work. The Lockhartites were still more bitter. Bulwer used the power he now had of hitting back in his own *New Monthly*, and a letter to Lockhart by the "Author of *Pelham*" showed that he could be quite as pungent and epigrammatic as the editor of the *Quarterly* himself; it brought the quarrel to a head. From this time the long-standing breach began to repair itself. Within eighteen months the two men met in Lady Blessington's Gore House drawing-room. Instead of avoiding, they advanced towards each other as by a common impulse and cordially shook hands. Both were equally ready to admit themselves in the wrong. That which chiefly wounded, and indeed not unnaturally almost maddened Bulwer in the early treatment he received from Lockhart, Thackeray, and those who wrote to their order, was not the severity of the criticism, but the absence of any real criticism at all. The Press was not less slow to appreciate Bulwer as a literary force than was the public to see in Disraeli a serious politician. That, however, did not prevent the early years of his London life from witnessing his gradual promotion to a front place among novelists and pamphleteers. The period now reached included an event more important to Bulwer than his magazine editorship. In the April of 1831 General Gascoyne's committee amendment to the first Grey Reform Bill then before Parliament produced a sudden dissolution. Among its consequences was Bulwer's return for St. Ives,

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 187

Hunts. The events preceding the General Election of 1831 and the famous measure that was its immediate cause may be briefly recalled. Edward Bulwer's boyish recollections went back to the days when, as was related in an earlier chapter, his father formed one of the military committee for concerting methods of national defence during the Napoleonic wars. The incidents of that struggle had involved the exclusion of the British Isles from commercial intercourse not only with their continental neighbours on the eastern side of the Atlantic, but with America itself. Under the rigid system of Protection thus imposed our agricultural and manufacturing population had a prosperity artificial indeed, but absolutely unprecedented. The operation of the Berlin Decree, the continental league of neutrality, and in 1814 the second war with the United States, both for food and for manufactures had caused England to depend entirely upon home products. It was not the owners who alone benefited by the high price of land ; the farmer's profits were correspondingly increased by the power of selling crops practically at his own price. At the same time the call for soldiers and sailors to fight the nation's battles abroad suspended competition in the agricultural and labour market at home. Not only the clothes worn by Englishmen in continental campaigns came from the great centres of Midland and Lancashire or Yorkshire industry, the woollen garments dealt out to the French troops in and during the retreat from Moscow had been made at Bradford.

In 1815 came the peace ; the stimulus to English markets and factories forthcoming from the wants the war created was withdrawn. The reaction which followed brought with it a distress so wide and deep as practically to be universal. The manufacturers suddenly found themselves without an opening for disposing of those goods on whose preparation they had embarked their own and much borrowed capital as well. Tradesmen, wholesale and retail, who had hitherto

done a roaring business, suddenly put up the shutters and went through the court. An epidemic of insolvency ensued. The rush of depositors to draw out their cash caused banks to fail. The frightened haste with which creditors realized their securities brought tens of thousands to the verge of ruin and even over the brink. Never had there been heard such a crash of falling millionaires. Whatever of temporary relief may have been derived from the corn law of 1815 was more than neutralized four years later by the resumption of cash payments greatly to the disadvantage of debtors. At the same time an evil scarcely less serious in its social and moral as well as financial consequences appeared in the antagonism now beginning to be displayed by the landed to the commercial classes.

The universal discontent rather than any national enthusiasm for an extended franchise expressed itself in the cry for parliamentary reform. Bulwer occasionally on provincial platforms in his paternal county Norfolk, or his adopted county Hertfordshire, but more frequently with his pen in London newspapers, was among the most energetic of those who urged that the demand could not be refused if the so-called representative chamber were to reflect anything but the prejudices and interests of the great territorial potentates. The facts and figures by which he supported his arguments had already become familiar to those whom he addressed. The great northern centres of manufacturing industry were so far without a voice in the management of their nation's affairs. Elsewhere, as he took pains to show by statistics not then worn threadbare, the parliamentary vote in counties was confined to a mere handful of persons with no greater qualification for its exercise than the excluded masses. A West Indian slave-owner, an East Indian Begum or Rajah buys an English or Irish borough, puts into it some favourite who of course represents no more than the whims of that dusky *Cræsus*. Throughout the

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 189

length and breadth of the land parliamentary seats can be bought like opera tickets, and more easily than on Grisi or Malibran nights. Just two generations ago Lord Chatham called borough representation the rotten part of our constitution, and said in 1766 either that or Parliament must go. Still the so-called members of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester are the nominees of the old nobility or the new wealth. In the Lower House the Duke of Norfolk had eleven members, the other great dukes annul seven, eight, and so on.

We have, was Bulwer's argument, now to support Lord Grey and the Whigs, not because we believe in them (for we know them to be in politics what Bacon calls first causes in philosophy, like vestal virgins or mules, producing nothing). We act with them because it is in a Whig channel that the active forces of creative Radicalism must flow. "The Whigs," sneered Bulwer, "reformers at heart! Why, had not Lord Althorp recently blurted out that the day of reform had gone by, and that, so far as he and his friends were concerned, they had quite given up any thought of further moving in the matter? Whiggery, with all its airs and arrogance, is and always was a myth and a sham. No Whig ever moved an inch without the crack of the popular whip or the Radical kick from behind. But before we throw the Whigs away we must use them first." "For myself," exclaimed Bulwer on another occasion, after Wellington's defeat on Sir Henry Parnell's Civil List motion in 1830 had brought in Earl Grey at the head of a Reform Cabinet, "if I wanted to know what the coming Bill would be like, I should look not to those in the Prime Minister's confidence, but to a Charing Cross tailor, Francis Place, who has defined some of the provisions indispensable to any Reform Bill that can meet our necessities. Mr. Wallas Graham's life of Place was published more than seventy years after this expression of Bulwer's opinion; it shows the excellent

information and the undoubted accuracy with which he spoke. Bulwer therefore in the thirties, though supporting the Whigs and a member of that Whig social stronghold—Brooks's Club—saw the real reformers and the true pioneers of reform in the philosophic Radicals of the period. At the head of these was Jeremy Bentham. Among his disciples were David Ricardo, the political economist, and James Mill, with William Cobbett in the *Twopenny Register* for chief popular writer of his precepts. The acquaintance with Holland House, promoted as has been seen by Macaulay at the close of Bulwer's Cambridge days, had not led up to any political results. Sympathizing, in the manner now shown, with the Radicals as the true pioneers of all progress, Bulwer so far was even less of a Whig than of a Tory. His literary audacities had indeed secured him a Radical support, on which, however, during his first electoral period he did not lean. For the rest, his decision to avail himself of the first good opportunity for getting into Parliament had been made without any thought of his views being advanced by either of the two political parties, or for that matter even by his own family interest and connection. The mistress of Knebworth had already been displeased at the candidature in 1830 of her son Henry Bulwer for Hertford, notwithstanding his subsequent withdrawal to prevent a division of the Liberal vote. The retirement, indeed, had been followed by consequences more disagreeable to Mrs. Lytton than if her second son had actually gone to the poll; for Lord Glengall made this "backing out," as he called it, the subject of some uncomplimentary remarks. Of these, in his brother's absence, Edward Bulwer took notice. A duel was only prevented by Glengall's withdrawing his offensive comments, and even so not before the creation of some scandal, highly displeasing to the Knebworth princess, who, if she did not forbid, at least discouraged her youngest son's candidature for any

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 191

seat within her dominion. Meanwhile at the General Election of 1830 Henry Bulwer had been returned as member for Wilton, and the first Parliament in which he sat was already on the eve of dissolution. The struggle thus impending was to form the beginning of Edward Bulwer's parliamentary course. On the 21st of March, 1831, the Reform Bill introduced by Lord John Russell had passed its second reading by a majority of one. Exactly a month later the acceptance in committee of the Gascoyne amendment against diminishing the numbers of the House of Commons left the Grey ministry no alternative but to resign or dissolve. Under circumstances full of dramatic interest and too familiar to permit recapitulation here the latter of these alternatives was chosen. During the last week of April, 1831, began the General Election which seated Edward Bulwer as member for St. Ives. At first he had thought of trying his chance at St. Albans; that, however, was on the prohibited soil. Unlike her second and her youngest son, Mrs. Lytton inherited none of her father Warburton Lytton's democratic or at least popular leanings. Hence of these two brothers, Henry had gone to a Wiltshire constituency, Edward was looking for a place elsewhere to which he might be floated by the tide running now so strongly for the Reformers. Bowring and Godwin had both given him political testimonials for, and promises of help at Southwark. They had, they said, heard from his own lips, sentiments which, combined with his great abilities, would augur a career of rectitude and honour. Meanwhile popular demonstrations for the Reform Bill grew daily in number and vehemence. In London the Duke of Wellington's windows and those of other dissidents from reform were smashed. In the provinces anti-reform mansions were burned to the ground; and the yells of the mob outside the house where she was staying nearly frightened the pet dog of Mrs. Bulwer to death. In Scotland Sir Walter

Scott, then on his death-bed, was hooted by the Jedburgh roughs. Among the places disposed to welcome Bulwer were Penryn and Taunton. The most promising prospect was, however, offered him by St. Ives in Huntingdonshire. There he began his canvass on April 23, 1831; in four weeks he could tell his mother of his return. He personally took the oaths at St. Stephen's in the following June. It has been said that on this occasion he was introduced to the Speaker by John Bowring and by C. P. Villiers. Neither of these persons became a member of the House till four years after Bulwer's return. As a fact no introducers were necessary, because he came in with a crowd of successful candidates at the General Election. A Radical pure and simple, he knew personally no other Whig leader than one so advanced as to be more Radical than Whig. This was Lord Durham, for whom Disraeli's pungent wit had secured the description of "the vainest man in the world." Asked some years later whether he did not consider the phrase too severe, Disraeli replied "I do not," adding with the pleasant badinage he often applied to his friends, "and this I say having read the letters of Cicero and known Bulwer-Lytton." * In the Midland Dukeries Bulwer in 1831 was bracketed with Tom Paine; † for had not the author of the *Age of Reason* advocated increased land taxation?—much, it may be said, after the fashion that in the session of 1909 Mr. Lloyd George endeavoured to make law. Had not the author of the *Disowned* expressed in that novel and in his newspaper scribblings sentiments favourable to the

* After the attitude of the Carrington family had closed Wycombe against him, Disraeli, still uncommitted to either party, was asked by Lyndhurst to stand at Lynn as a friend of Lord Chandos. At the same time Lord Durham offered him a sure seat as a Radical. So began and so practically ended the short and slight association of the future Lord Beaconsfield with Lord Durham.

† Paine, dying on his farm near New Rochelle in the state of New York, was buried there in unconsecrated ground. Eventually a reactionary mob outraged the tomb. Part of the gravestone found its way to Hertfordshire and was discovered by Lord Lytton in an outhouse near Knebworth.

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 193

confiscation or breaking-up of great estates, hailing Paine himself as a social and political reformer born out of due time, whose destructive absurdities and ruinous chimæras—so they were then called—would a little later, as indeed has practically proved to be the case, become the common-places of moderate reformers, Conservative not less than Liberal.

More than a twelvemonth before he took his seat began the series of incidents which first brought Bulwer into the House of Commons. In 1830, Sir Henry Parnell's success with his Civil List motion caused the Duke of Wellington, with his colleagues, to resign, and their places to be taken by the Reform Government of Lord Grey. Bulwer had always distrusted the declarations of the Whig peers for Reform, and was at this time impartially attacking with his pen both parties in the Upper House alike. In *The Student* (pp. 338-9) he republished specimens of the newspaper writings during the Reform period. He was bitterly, rather than effectively, facetious about the indignation of the peers at their alleged connection with newspapers, and the Duke of Wellington's anti-Reform protest intended as a sort of kite, its tail ornamented with proofs of how many silly little men were hereditary legislators under William IV. In the lobbies, if not in the chamber itself, the whispered anticipations of the expected Reform Bill had included dark hints about peers communicating with the press. The good Lords were enraged by being supposed capable of any intellectual effort. "I write for the newspapers?" cries Lord Durham in horror. "What a calumny!" "It is enough to agonize one," groans Lord Grey. "A nobleman writing political pamphlets! Horrible breach of privilege—to be credited with the power of constructing a grammatical sentence." "Really," was Bulwer's comment, "the Lords might spare themselves the trouble of denial. Who would consider *The*

Times worthy of abusing if their lordships had much to do with it? As for the pamphlet just committed by the Duke of Newcastle, that might be excused, for did it not show that, while without the remotest idea of English, his grace was a true type of the peerage, sounding and brainless?" When he addressed them in a more serious tone, Bulwer's chief appeal to the Lords was to imitate his own example of looking for wide general causes in history. "Doing this," he said, "they would view the English Reform movement as part of the great current of political change then traversing continental Europe." To that opinion it might have been answered that the coincidence of the two epochs would prove, on a closer examination, for the most part accidental. The unity pervading the more advanced continental states was admitted by the Duke of Wellington as completely as could have been urged by Bulwer. From that correspondence of tendency its peculiar conditions often exclude England. This was notably the case when the causes which, in 1815, drew the western half of the Continent closely together, held England aloof from the prevailing influences, and in thought, religion, and taste made this country more insular than it had been in 1780. That, or to be exact, 1785, was the date at which the second Pitt had actually proposed a reform of Parliament already long acknowledged to be necessary. Had such a measure, however, then been carried, it by no means follows, as Bulwer seems to have thought, that the Act of 1832 might have been dispensed with. For Pitt merely proposed a transfer of members for decayed boroughs to the counties. Between 1790 and 1830 the growth of towns and the enrichment of the urban middle class would have rendered Pitt's reforms out of date and rendered irresistible the demand for some such supplementary measure as Grey's. Since leaving Cambridge, under Benthamite direction, Bulwer had read history and political economy for the House of Commons

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 195

as systematically as if he had been preparing for a University examination. At the same time he had spared no pains, by personal observation during his various sojourns abroad, as well as by the minute assimilation of literary materials, to perfect a knowledge of foreign affairs and international relationships that would enable him to speak with authority at St. Stephen's and not as a mere professional scribe. The conclusions reached by him on these and other matters may be looked at before following the various stages of his parliamentary course.

The papers called "Asmodeus at Large," brought together in *The Student*, contain the remark: "You English do not pay enough attention to foreign literature and foreign politics to understand your own. You ought to hear what the rest of the world says of you, and to see how true are the views which, from a just distance, foreigners, Frenchmen in particular, form of your successive political situations, and of the causes which have produced them. As it is, you are like a man who can only talk of himself and to himself; one great national soliloquist, wrapped in a monologue." * Here one may see another illustration of Bulwer's anxiety to qualify for becoming a teacher of his time. To him, as to many other eager young men on their first introduction to the world, in 1826, it had seemed a novel discovery that in society morals, politics, art, and letters there were other points of view and other standards of success than the English. Ever since then he had most characteristically striven to teach his generation the principles of a sober and practical cosmopolitanism. In his parliamentary and extra-parliamentary speeches, whenever their subject allowed, he emphasized the same point. This idea also reappeared in each number of the *New Monthly*, and, before he controlled that periodical, had been elaborated on many other platforms. Thus his introduction to the

* *The Student*, p. 302, "Knebworth" edition.

comparative study of French and English politics appeared in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* during 1842, but had been put into its final shape at a date much in advance of its publication there.

A certain sympathy with the French Revolutionary leaders, though repudiated by Bulwer's mother, was, as has been seen, a Lytton tradition ; the composition just mentioned, the *Reign of Terror*, may well on its first appearance have impressed the public by the same kind of freshness and force as, more than a generation later, was to characterize Viscount Morley's writings on the encyclopædists, and other French studies of that period. Attracting more notice abroad than at home, Bulwer's *Reign of Terror* first acquainted the Paris public with those features in the contrast between French and English polity that led up to the democratic tyranny from 1788 to 1793.* The starting-point is Bulwer's favourite thesis; already implied in his apologia for the Old Bailey romances. Alike with the individual and the community, guilt is but the result of previous circumstance. Neglected education and vicious example send a thief to the hulks and a murderer to the gibbet. What education and example are to the man, government and legislation are to the people. We shall do right if we blame the causes that make a demon of the multitude ; wrong if we regard the demon itself only as a suffering angel. The primary causes of the eighteenth-century revolution were dated by Bulwer from the civil, religious, and commercial policy of Richelieu in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The aristocracy then, from being a check upon the king, became the decoration of his court. All varieties of dissent were coerced into the one Church. To the accomplishment of those ends moral

* George Duval's onslaught upon the chief actors in the French Revolution, with its consequent distortion and exaggeration of facts, formed the occasion of Bulwer's composition. Republished in the "Knebworth" edition.

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 197

as well as political agencies contributed. The marriages of the French aristocracy were, for the most part, those of convenience. The husband's knowledge of his bride had frequently not extended beyond the details of her dower and her expectations. The lady's fortune made her independent of her husband, who was blind to her infidelity as she at his. Indeed, he had no alternative; for the Roman Church's prohibition of divorce compelled the husband to choose between the shame of connivance at his own dishonour and the ridicule of impotently proclaiming it. Politically the most important difference between France and England was the French absence of the representative system. With the English that system, however clumsy and open to abuses its machinery, had opened for the highest orders a healthful field of energy and ambition, only to be accomplished by familiar intercourse with their inferiors. An election here, bringing all classes together, unites them in common links of passion and interest. The feudal system did not bind together the baron and the vassal more closely than, by the electoral system, are fused into a real unity peer and commoner, rich and poor, great and small. To that end is shaped the training of the highest and greatest in our land. The English aristocracy, therefore, by the intellectual cultivation through which they consequently pass, become of necessity more manly, practical, businesslike, and robust than those who formed a corresponding class in a country where public life, as here understood, did not exist, and where ambition had no opening except in the army or in the drawing-room—where the best passports to a place at court, to a fashionable position, to a rich marriage, to a colonelcy in the army were to be found in a graceful person, in a charming manner, or in a knack of conversational cleverness. In the Church, meanwhile, sinecures were monopolized by abbés who were priests only in name, and whose dissolute lives were veiled

by no show of decency. Thus in England the administration of affairs was in the hands of a vigorous aristocracy ; in France, on the other hand, the business of the State was done by members of the *bourgeoisie* or the Bar. While therefore in England the power of the upper classes increased daily, in France the representatives of this order fell not only into unpopularity, but into contempt. Riche-lieu's commercial legislation had, however, promoted the growth of a French middle class, but one which lacked entirely the invigorating opportunities for the display of its energies which had stimulated and trained that same portion of the community here. The French *bourgeois* could only become a personage in his native land by mimicking the manners and competing with the follies of the *noblesse*. The *roturier* might desire State employment, or admission to the army for himself. In the first half of the eighteenth century he could get neither without rising to the level of a *gentilhomme* ; for that he had, at an arbitrary cost, to purchase a title given for the most part on condition of purchasing also, for the purpose of qualification, an estate. In this twentieth century a leading French *député*, M. J. Jaurés, has been credited with something of a novelty in showing the French Revolution to have been essentially a middle-class movement. Nearly two generations earlier, by the line of argument now traced, Edward Bulwer had reached and illustrated the same conclusion.

As a member of the House of Commons Bulwer, while free from obligations to either party or any section, has been seen to combine Radical tendencies with the accident of Radical acquaintanceship. His account of Chatham's son in his remarks on Pitt and Fox is not without many autobiographical touches. His description of William Pitt's isolation from all sections of party on supporting Burke's movement for economical reform, in 1781, is so put as to remind his readers or hearers that his own independence of

LITERARY & POLITICAL PLATFORMS 199

leaders on either side was equally complete. Especially about the leaders of the party to whom, at the crisis of 1831, he had attached himself, his language presents a striking parallel to that employed by his friend Disraeli during the same period. Instead of the Venetian system, of which so much is said in *Coningsby*, we hear from Bulwer of the Whigs in the Fox and Rockingham era being the Hebrews of politics. Regarding themselves as a chosen race they inherited their creed with their birth, grudging that faith even to proselytes. They courted no converts, even among those whom they aspired to govern. No Tory from Edom, no Radical from Moab could claim admission into their sacred tribes. William Pitt, in Bulwer's comment, accepted this exclusion; he held himself aloof from the recognized chiefs. Fox and Shelburne might sue for his aid; neither the one nor the other could lay claim to his allegiance.

Of Bulwer's social position and hospitalities at his well-appointed Mayfair house something has already been said. Benjamin Disraeli was not to follow Bulwer into Parliament till 1837; in that period the intimacy between Bulwer and Disraeli reached its height. Among the visits which the two paid together was one to Gunnersbury, then recently acquired by the Rothschild family. There they had their earliest meeting with the future Napoleon III, at that time an exile in London, and shortly to be a guest in Hertford Street on a memorable occasion. The party had assembled in the drawing-room; before going downstairs, Disraeli holding after his fashion his coat-tails over his arm, displayed on his garment the marks of the chair on which he had been sitting. As he came up to where his hostess was sitting with one of her guests, Samuel Rogers, the latter whispered, "Disraeli the Jew with the brand of cane upon him." "I want you, Mr. Disraeli," said the hostess, "to take Mrs. Wyndham Lewis down to dinner." "Oh," was the answer,

“anything rather than that insufferable woman. But Allah is great”; with these words the future Lord Beaconsfield walked up to the lady he was afterwards to marry, whose acquaintance, like so many other opportunities of his life, he thus owed to his brother novelist. This, too, was the occasion on which, the conversation turning on Dean Swift, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis innocently asked: “Pray where is this gentleman to be heard of? for I should like to ask him to my parties.” That, of course, was this good lady’s way, giving rise as it did to innumerable stories about her, as Bulwer predicted would be the case. Bulwer’s good offices to Disraeli had already been shown in securing him the *entrée* of *Almack’s*, as well as the introductions to the earliest clubs of which he was a member; it appropriately culminated after the fashion just described in Disraeli’s presentation to the lady who, by becoming his wife a few years later, laid the foundation of his political fortunes. As an earlier chapter has shown, the youthful friendship of the two men had grown out of the literary interests common to the two young men. The acquaintance had been cemented more closely by the message with which Isaac Disraeli desired his son Benjamin to acknowledge the receipt of *Paul Clifford*;—“You have stamped the romance with a new character by opening fresh and untasted springs; I am confident that, with your fertility of invention, you may vary without exhausting the nature and the art which you command.” From 1830 onwards communications almost exclusively on literary subjects flowed between the younger Disraeli and Edward Bulwer in a constantly increasing stream. The burden of profit from this intercourse was altogether with the future Lord Beaconsfield. Disraeli’s classical and literary education had been too imperfect to guard him against errors in composition of taste and style. Bulwer’s matured scholarship and sound criticism were at once recognized by Disraeli as supplying

the exact kind of help he wanted. During 1830, the year of *Paul Clifford*, Disraeli submitted to his friend the manuscript of the *Young Duke*; the wit of that book, the terseness, the philosophy of its style, the remarkable felicity with which the coldest insipidities of real life were made entertaining and racy, in a word its genius, were praised by Bulwer as they deserved. The faults were those of judgment. There were too many flippancies and far too many of those antithetical neatnesses of style that made the great feature of his writing. On this point Bulwer's observations were so sound as almost to merit to be printed in letters of gold for the benefit of clever young writers of all time. "Whenever your antithesis attains a witticism or a new truth, don't alter a syllable. Whenever you see that it aims at a point and does not acquire it, cut remorselessly." "You have," continued Bulwer, "gone higher in the *Young Duke* than in *Vivian Grey*, but I don't think you have enough avoided these faults. Your ornate and showy effeminacy in particular should be lopped on the same principle that Lord Ellenborough should cut off his hair. Finally, if you suspect that I am in the least right about this volume, and if it be a fair specimen of others, put yourself some fine morning in a bad temper with Antithesis and Voltaire, and go carefully pen in hand over the manuscript." Within two years of his having cautioned the author of the *Young Duke* against gaudy and ungraceful ornament, Bulwer, who had promised to help Disraeli in standing for Wycombe, arrived at the field of action to drive round the place with his friend; to his surprise he found Disraeli lolling in an open carriage and four, dressed in a laced shirt, a blue coat with pink lining, and cherry-coloured velvet trousers. So habited, with Bulwer at his side, Disraeli jumped upon the portico of the "Red Lion" and gave it them for an hour and a quarter,—the men, commented Bulwer, being nearly driven mad, and all the women wearing Disraeli's

colours, pink and white. In this electoral adventure Bulwer brought something more to Disraeli than his own presence and support. He was at that time the favourite political pupil of Joseph Hume. That father of English Radicalism, as a personal kindness to Bulwer, had written a letter commending Disraeli to the Wycombe constituency. This testimonial was duly produced by Bulwer at his friend's side on the gathering of the "Red Lion." Its contents, then and there read by him in his most impressively fashionable voice, amid a storm of cheers from the crowd below, were to the following effect, as may be seen from the local papers of June 9, 1832. To reap the benefit of Reform, Englishmen must do their duty by selecting honest, independent, and talented men such as Bulwer had satisfied Hume Disraeli was. Bulwer also secured for Disraeli further commendations from Sir Francis Burdett and Daniel O'Connell; the latter, however, could only tell Bulwer he wished Disraeli well, but had no influence at Wycombe to exert on his behalf.

CHAPTER IX

TEN YEARS OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE

Bulwer's political education impels him towards Radicalism—Aversion to Tory policy of pure obstruction—Literary M.P.s contemporary with Bulwer—Bulwer's successful maiden speech—Association with Disraeli's election fight at Wycombe—No sportsman, but a mild angler—Attack on monopolies created by laws relating to Game and the Drama—The author of *Pelham* as founder of the modern stage—He advocates cheaper postage for newspapers—Becomes M.P. for Lincoln—The newspaper tax—Bulwer's efforts for its mitigation—Political writings—Success of letter *To a late Cabinet Minister on the Crisis*—A Junior Lordship of the Admiralty declined—But offer of baronetcy accepted—Brilliant anti-slavery speech, 1838—A plea for the ballot—Production of *Lady of Lyons*—A two-fold success—Opposition to Corn Law repeal—Beginning of gradual conversion to Conservatism—His election defeat at Lincoln—Oratorical powers and appearance in the House—Essentials of a good speech—Difference between Reformed and Unreformed parliaments—Beneficial effect of the change on Bulwer's eloquence—Fashionable affectations of the day.

RARE, indeed, if any are the instances afforded by English political history of men who achieved their greatest distinction on the side first taken by them for their own, or whose greatest title to fame with posterity arises from their association with the party principles with which they commenced. As in the nineteenth century so it had been in its predecessor. Charles James Fox, as Lord North's follower, began with being not less of a stern unbending Tory than Gladstone himself. By intellectual taste and political temper Pitt was the political and economical reformer who had advocated popular enfranchisement before Grey had made the question his own; but for the French Revolution and the armed international struggle following it, Chatham's son would be remembered to-day as the political emancipator of the masses for whom Fox cared as little as other well-born and fashionable habitués

of the Pavilion and of Carlton House. Both the most distinguished among the literary Conservative cabinet ministers of the nineteenth century, Bulwer and Disraeli, started at the same distance from the Tories, with a common dislike of the Whigs and a chance association with the ultra-Radicals. In the case of Bulwer his earliest studies at Cambridge under Whewell, and afterwards of a more purely literary kind, at the instance of Isaac Disraeli, had qualified him to find an intellectual basis for the Radical opinions with which he began his political course. In public affairs the chief bond of union between himself and Benjamin Disraeli was antagonism to the Whigs and a contemptuous suspicion of a new-fangled conventional Conservatism now threatening the old Tory faith. Both men felt the same disgust at the Carlile and Cobbett prosecutions. With an historically nurtured predisposition to advanced political ideas were, in Bulwer's case, united a generous nature's real hatred of oppression and an indignant remembrance, itself making for Radicalism, of the base ingratitude shown by their party to the greatest Tory spirits, first to Clarendon and to Chatham, afterwards to Chatham's son and to Canning. Moreover, as has been already said, Bulwer's natural nobility recognized the saddest sight that modern civilization affords in the profitless consumption of human energy and, under existing conditions, the gratuitous degradation of virtuous potentialities into instruments of crime and vice. For political reform, except as an agency in ameliorating the entire social system, he cared little. But while the Liberals were at least earnest for efforts which might perhaps tend in the right direction, the sole idea of Conservatism seemed to be that of obstruction or delay. The then Lord Ashley, the future "good Lord Shaftesbury," had been touched not less deeply than the most sensitive Radical by the pictures of the lowest depth presented in *Paul Clifford*, but failed to see in an

enlarged franchise the remedy of the evil looked for by Bulwer and his friends. At the same time Bulwer's Radicalism, always that of speculation and sentiment rather than of advanced conviction, found an intellectual check not so much in any of Bolingbroke's positive precepts as in the logical tendency of those writings, studied by Bulwer as well as by Disraeli for models of political thought and literary style.

Bulwer's House of Commons period naturally divides itself into two parts of unequal length, respectively comprising ten and fourteen years. During the former of these terms he passed for a Liberal representing in that capacity St. Ives, 1831-2, and Lincoln from 1832-41; after an absence from the House of eleven years, and of much meditation on public questions, he came back the Conservative member for his own county, Hertfordshire, which he continued to represent till, in 1866, he went to the Upper House. The earlier sessions gave him a place in the small group of literary members, including, besides himself, Lord Francis Egerton, eventually Earl of Ellesmere, Silk Buckingham, Doctor, subsequently Sir, John Bowring. All who composed this little company had their own characteristics, distinguishing each from his neighbours. The man whose presence struck Bulwer as most noticeable was the member for Sheffield, Silk Buckingham;—tall, fair, with fine forehead, regular features, a face at once full and remarkably intellectual. Contemporary engravings show Buckingham's features, but neither his complexion nor the colour of his hair was reproduced by his handsome and clever son Leicester Buckingham, whom one need only be middle-aged to recall, during the late sixties, as the editor of the *Morning and Evening Star*. Silk Buckingham's hardships and fatigues in Eastern travel had not impaired his capacity for work, even though they had left his graceful action while speaking without some of its original vigour.

"The House," said Bulwer, writing at this time, "does not contain a more fluent, versatile orator than Silk Buckingham, or one whose manner and look bear more plainly the stamp of a well-bred gentleman. The chief difficulty against which he has to contend was the imputation, so easy to give and so difficult to take away, of being an adventurer." "With Buckingham I contrast," in 1835 wrote Bulwer, "Doctor Bowring, a quaint, rather elfish little figure below the middle height, with hair black as the evening coat which my *Pelham* made the vogue, with complexion pale as a passenger's on the Dover and Calais packet at the crisis of a big channel tossing." Among the best linguists of his time, Bowring had brought to Parliament the reputation of an easy and accurate writer who ought also to make his mark as a speaker. To his brother of the pen, Bulwer, he acted as a warning; fussiness of manner, an excessive frequency of utterance have never been conducive to parliamentary success; Bowring's habit of crowding his sentences with trivialities, and seldom essaying to speak on first-rate questions, also acted as useful warnings at this time, and taught the newly returned member for St. Ives the faults to avoid as well as the effects at which to aim. Lord Francis Egerton calls for special mention, as in non-political matters to some extent Bulwer's pioneer at St. Stephen's. Three years Bulwer's senior in age, and nine in parliamentary standing, Egerton in his angular face, aquiline nose, and generally keen features, bore some resemblance to Bulwer, from whom he chiefly differed in shade of complexion and colour of hair; for Bulwer, on his earliest appearance at St. Stephen's, still retained the pink and white countenance with the golden or light brown locks which had at least impressed, if they had not fascinated, his future wife on their first meeting at Miss Berry's tea-party. Egerton attracted little notice in the unreformed Parliament, and first really distinguished himself by unex-

pectedly winning the South-west Lancashire election. From this victory dates the staunch resistance with which he met at Westminster the various projects of social improvement supported and, indeed, demanded by Grey's Radical followers. The real likeness of the two to each other lay in the fact that Egerton was the one Parliament man belonging to the fashionable classes who, before Bulwer, had brought to Westminster literary reputation, not only as an agreeable versifier and well-informed essayist, but as a student of German authors sufficiently accomplished to render a good deal of Goethe into admitted elegant English. Of a calibre and kind widely different from Egerton, George Grote, the historian of Greece, was the most illustrious man of letters whose course at St. Stephen's, in 1831, overlapped by a few months that of Bulwer; for Cobbett, next to Place the most important of Grey's unacknowledged coadjutors, did not come in before 1832. What was it that about the Midsummer Day of 1831, apart from a novelist's notoriety, the people's House chiefly saw in the new member for St. Ives? In the first place nearly, if not quite, the handsomest of its recent recruits, and certainly by far the best dressed. This ardent Pittite, who had just strolled down with his brother Henry from Brooks's, took his place at the Speaker's right on a bench just above the gangway, in the blue frock-coat and buff waistcoat associated with Fox. From the first a certain weakness of voice did not prevent delivery from being agreeable, and his speech uniformly fluent. A look and air of intellectual distinction contributed, with a winning modesty of demeanour, to secure the new-comer a friendly reception when a few days later the Chair called upon him to address the assembly. Before the close of his first session he was known as a man who could always be depended on for a rattling party speech, and who had made several non-political subjects of the day especially his own.

Fettered by no pledges, personal or political, Bulwer was still one of those sent to Westminster for the purpose of retrieving the fortunes of Reform. His old Cambridge friend and parliamentary senior, Macaulay, had returned there with the same object. Naturally, therefore, Bulwer delivered his maiden speech in the second reading debate, July 5, 1831, on the measure substituted by Lord John Russell, now replacing the original and defeated Bill. On this occasion Bulwer's design was not so much to declare himself a loyal ministerialist * as to advocate incidentally one point, if not more than one, of the Radical charter. Universal suffrage, annual parliaments, payment of members, might stand over for a time. But the ballot was pronounced by Bulwer one of the Chartists' terms for which the time was already ripe. The Radical cheers elicited by that declaration were led by Joseph Hume, who made his way to where Bulwer was sitting not only to congratulate him on his début, but to place in his hands a second letter commending Disraeli to the Wycombe electors. Bulwer lost no time in making another journey to Wycombe. He brought with him Hume's fresh certificate stating Disraeli to be a fitting representative of the popular cause, and as trustworthy a champion of good and cheap government as the gentleman himself through whom this commendation was conveyed. These electioneering offices at Wycombe, in the days when both men were using the Radicals to make themselves independent of the Whigs, originated Bulwer's political friendship with Disraeli, with results which were not fully to be seen till the best part of half a century later. In Buckinghamshire he had established a

* From the late venerable Mr. C. P. Villiers the present writer heard some of the chief and more general points in Bulwer's earliest Reform speech, not, it would seem, preserved in all the reports. "No system of government," he said, "menaced both by the moral intelligence and the physical force of the country could long exist. Well, therefore, is it that, when authority can no longer support itself by the solemn plausibilities and ceremonious hypocrisies of old, our polity should be placed on a solid and sure foundation."

claim on the goodwill of the man of genius in the same cabinet with whom he was afterwards to sit. At Westminster he had begun the oratorical treatment of the ballot often elaborated by him subsequently. This was enough for one session, and Bulwer showed his judgment in preserving a contented silence at St. Stephen's. He made no further effort of importance till the third and successful edition of the Reform Bill had gone up to the Lords. Meanwhile, he prepared to address the House at a future day on those obsolete abuses which he had long foreseen the new democratic movement would sweep away in its course. A little sooner even than he had expected, began the parliamentary attack on the class privileges and monopolies whose doom under the new political dispensation he had always declared. Of the subject he had a practical knowledge from his Norfolk boyhood; he had planned *Quarterly* essays on it at Versailles, and had long since carefully elaborated the ideas about it, as they were some years afterwards to take their most polished and final form in *Caxtoniana*. Bulwer, it has been seen, though expert with the boxing gloves and the fencing foils, fond of riding, and at home on any horse, was not a sportsman, never rode to hounds nor handled a gun at a pheasant covert. The sportsman's indifference to the suffering of dumb animals and its influence on personal character are dwelt upon in a passage already quoted from *Night and Morning* (1841). His earliest words on the topic occur in the essay on the *Difference between the Urban and Rural Temperament* (1830). Lancashire mechanics had been, within Bulwer's knowledge, keen entomologists, issuing forth on summer evenings with butterfly nets, and thus illustrating that instinct of the chase which is one of the primitive ties between man and nature. Less to the point is another theory, according to which the chief attraction possessed by the hunting field for Englishmen is its opportuni-

ties for close acquaintance with the landscape in the least attractive season. Arrian, Chiron, Xenophon among the ancients, and Delmé Radcliffe among the moderns, are all quoted to defend the hunter against the charge of finding a delight in the slaying or torturing of dumb animals. For himself, says Bulwer, while no participator in the joys of more vehement sport, he owns to a pleasure in the tranquil cruelty of angling. In the case of hunting the social delights and the physical exhilaration accompanying it were the excuse for its incidental cruelty. "So," Bulwer pleaded, "with angling; treachery towards a poor little fish was the pardonable drawback to the innocence of revelry in the luxuriance of summer life, fully to be enjoyed by the followers of Isaac Walton alone. Thus, whatever the pastime, we must set off against the fate of the quarry pursued, the pleasurable sensation given to the pursuers. So do we sacrifice some vested interest to that pitiless Moloch the public advantage."*

The Reform Bill debates of 1831 were varied by discussions that gave the new member for St. Ives the opportunity of rehearsing with his voice the humanitarian considerations he was afterwards to enforce by his pen. Bull-baiting, cock-fighting, with some other entertaining barbarities, were not suppressed till the expression of the healthier public opinion stimulated by the thirty-two Reform Act. Revision of the Game Laws was, however, effected while the Grey Bill was still under discussion, and then chiefly because the peers were so preoccupied with it as to have no time or energy for thwarting pettier proposals. Up to this time (1831) legislation reserved as an exclusive privilege for the territorial classes not only the killing but, so far as could be done, even the eating of game. Younger sons of peers, even of princes, could not legally carry a gun. Statutes, still unrepealed, forbade shooting to all save lords

* *Caxtoniana*, p. 23, etc.

of the manor of ancient standing, and to such as were permitted to represent them. To sell game in any place or to any purchaser was a legal offence. As a consequence game preservation became in practice the exception rather than the rule ; squires bred as much feather and fur as they needed for their own table. Pheasant's eggs were as common an article of daily diet as hen's eggs. Presently, however, roads were improved, " Lightning " coaches and " Quicksilver " mails traversed them at what, fifteen years earlier, would have seemed an impossible pace. Game could thus be carried long distances from where it was killed ; the whole transaction remained still a punishable offence, but the demand created the supply. Pheasants and hares found their way as freely and regularly as rabbits into the market. The refusal of juries to convict made existing statutes a dead letter. The entire Game Law code came to be recognized as quite impracticable between the years 1824 and 1831. At the earlier of these dates a great Yorkshire squire, Stuart Wortley, carried through the Commons a Bill permitting any owner to shoot over his own land and to allow licensed dealers to sell game. Althorp, a keen sportsman and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1831, in the midst of the Reform Bill debates found time organically to recast the legal conditions under which game of all kinds might be killed in the field and purchased in the market. The discussions thus raised first gave Bulwer an opportunity of showing in the House of Commons the same appreciative intimacy with English country life which was gradually to transform *Falkland's* and *Pelham's* creator into the author of the *Caxtons* and *My Novel*. *My Novel*, indeed, largely reflects the social aspects of the transfer of power from the old acres to the new wealth.

" Before," wrote Bulwer, " a third of the nineteenth century had passed the landowner had lost his position ; his power was gone, his privileges had ceased to exist. In

a word, his order had been worsted in the struggle for existence by other and newer ranks of society. Men like Sir Compton Delaval, with pedigrees as long as Welshmen's, were reluctantly compelled to pretend pleasure and pride at ranking Mr. Avenel's and other tradespeople's sons amongst the gentlemen of the county." The commercial movements helping forward that social revolution were older than Bulwer's earliest efforts at novel writing. Nine years before his support of the Grey Bill gave him a parliamentary seat, Huskisson's legislation had laid the foundation of middle-class fortunes by cheapening raw materials used in English manufactures.

Bulwer's personal effort at social legislation was to swell the volume of moral forces which had so long been preparing to create English constitution of 1832. The Lords, indeed, were finally dealing with Reform in committee, when Bulwer showed his just estimate of the popular influences now daily asserting themselves against statutory exclusiveness of all kinds, by a motion in the House calling for a few explanatory words. In 1832 the law still restricted theatrical performances to the two patent theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Under the Restoration smaller houses had been licensed for miscellaneous pieces, almost invariably of an immoral, occasionally of a disgusting kind. Those evil associations had sufficed to give all theatres a bad name. Taking counsel with his friend, Macready, the member for St. Ives now took a step which made him a regenerator and even the founder of the modern stage. On the last day of May, 1832, he moved for a select committee of enquiry into the laws affecting dramatic literature and the performance of the drama. Bulwer's argument was based upon the facts already mentioned. Though the minor and unlicensed theatres were violations of the law they still existed, and multiplied. The thousands of actors forming their companies were outlaws, deprived of any legal remedy for

wrongs inflicted by the managers, or by others who employed them. While these sheets were passing through the press the Lord Chamberlain's dramatic censorship formed the subject on which members of Parliament were examining managers, actors, authors, and critics. Bulwer in 1832 had something to say upon this matter also. He reminded his hearers of Lord Chesterfield's words about the censorship on its establishment in 1735. It gave, said Chesterfield, an officer of the Household a power more unconstitutional and absolute than that of the king himself. Bulwer not only got his committee, but before the end of the session laid on the table its report. This was to the effect that the monopolies of Drury Lane and Covent Garden neither preserved the dignity of the drama nor secured any advantage for the monopolists themselves. In the same spirit that he had taken up the stage Bulwer next addressed himself to the condition of the press. On June 14, 1832, he submitted to the House a resolution for cheap postage on newspapers and other periodicals. Eventually the proposal was withdrawn at the wish of Althorp, who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, then acted as leader, and who expressed his warm approval of Bulwer's object. Within a twelvemonth, therefore, of his first return, on subjects widely different from each other Bulwer had achieved three marked successes. These ensured the member for the now disfranchised St. Ives at the first General Election held under the Reform Act in the December of 1832 invitations from three of the constituencies it had recast. He chose Lincoln because the Liberal electors of that city shared his own objections to Free Trade now known to be in the wind. Nine years later Lincoln had been converted to total and immediate abolition. In 1841, therefore, came Bulwer's first defeat at the cathedral borough which he had originally won in the teeth of a two-fold ducal opposition. In 1847 a second unsuccessful candidature at once severed his connection with the place

and began for him an absence from Westminster lasting till 1852. The later years of his membership for Lincoln formed the most fruitful portion of his entire Radical career. They identified him, as nothing had yet done, with those principles of popular liberty whose gradual triumph was to find its monument in an absolutely free Press. What had been the course of this struggle in whose final stages Bulwer played so important a part? In 1712 a stamp duty of a penny had been laid on every printed copy of a newspaper. This it was which made Addison predict the impending doom of many among the most eminent of our weekly or daily historians. The impost, indeed, proved so fatal that several newspapers expired without a struggle. For the time, therefore, the levying of the tax ceased. In 1760, however, it was renewed at a fixed rate of a penny a sheet. Thereafter it was steadily advanced, first to twopence in 1776, then to fourpence in 1815. A high customs tariff had the effect of promoting smuggling, instead of putting it down. A costly newspaper stamp was followed by an immense growth of unstamped newspapers. These even under the Grey Government had subjected between four and five hundred persons to imprisonment. The penalty, however, was reserved for the poor and ignorant hawkers of these broadsheets. Their proprietors and conductors were too powerful to be touched, and escaped scot-free. Bulwer, as member for Lincoln, distinguished himself and his constituency by his expression of the rising resentment against the operation of the tax, and of the growing conviction that the true antidotes to seditious and immoral writing were the wholesome products of a cheap and loyal press. At the same time he co-operated with Hallam the historian, Denman the Chief Justice, James Mill, Cornwall Lewis, Herman Merivale, Matthew and Rowland Hill, in encouraging Charles Knight as publisher for the *Useful Knowledge Society* and especially as founder

of the *Penny Magazine* and the *Penny Encyclopædia*. Still the taxes were not taken off; Althorp, while applauding the publications, declared in 1834, as was done by his successor in the Exchequer, Spring Rice, in 1835, that the revenue could not afford the change. Bulwer therefore, in and out of Parliament, now changed his tactics. "Reduce," he said, "the tax from fourpence to a penny; here are statistics showing there will be no loss. On the contrary, the circulation, he argued, would be at least trebled by the change. Consequently the new penny duty will produce three-fourths as much as the old penny duty, and any deficiency will be more than made good by the increased revenue from the tax on advertisements and the excise on paper. If Bulwer had been so consummate a master of figures as Spring Rice he might have secured the immediate discontinuance of the tax; but the revenue just then little more than sufficed for the national needs; no Radical economist or arithmetician could destroy the Chancellor of the Exchequer's calculation. Spring Rice, therefore, pledged his word as soon as might be to repeal the duty, and meanwhile asked for the delay, which was of course allowed him.

Bulwer's fame as a literary parliament man differed in kind rather than in degree from that belonging to other men of letters who sat with him at Westminster, such as Grote, Molesworth, and Cobbett. None of these, however, nor even Disraeli himself used his pen with Bulwer's success in emphasizing his public views and advancing his parliamentary fortunes. All those earlier efforts were to be eclipsed by his pamphleteering masterstroke, shortly before the opening of the Victorian Age. Lord Althorp's removal to the Upper House on the death of his father, Earl Spencer, in 1834, had for its immediate sequel the dismissal of the Whigs under Melbourne and their replacement by Sir Robert Peel. The increase in the Conservative vote was not large enough to prevent Peel's resignation. Melbourne,

dismissed in November, was sent for again five months later, in April, and went on as before. At the beginning of these quick changes Bulwer launched his most successful pamphlet in the form of a *Letter to a late Cabinet Minister on the Crisis*. The first edition sold out on the day of its appearance. For the next fortnight a fresh issue was disposed of in every succeeding twenty-four hours. Even at its original price of three-and-sixpence, twenty editions were exhausted. A slight reduction on that charge more than proportionately extended its success. I have heard from authorities so likely to be well-informed as Abraham Hayward and A. W. Kinglake, that Melbourne himself and his friends considered this composition of Bulwer's had more to do with their return to office, in 1835, than any other single circumstance. The Whigs, therefore, shortly after regaining power, recognized Bulwer's services by the magnificent offer of a Junior Lordship of the Admiralty. The pamphleteer had the audacity to prefer his independence as a private member to the chance of wearing the official Whig livery. The discreetly worded reason alleged for refusing the promotion was a natural disinclination to let any official labours interrupt his literary engagements. In 1838 Melbourne showed a higher estimate of Bulwer's deserts by offering him a baronetcy, which caused him henceforth to be known as Sir Edward Lytton-Bulwer, until, in 1844, inheriting Knebworth, he became Bulwer-Lytton. Meanwhile, in 1833, he had taken part in the debates on the factory reform, had shown the courage of his genuine Liberalism by resisting the Whig policy of coercion in Canada and Ireland. He had also shown entire consistency with his earliest belief in the inviolable lead of a national religious establishment by acting as the spokesman of the Whig malcontents, who resisted the application, involved in their leaders' proposal, of Irish ecclesiastical funds to secular

purposes. Justice has already been done to his efforts for Free Trade in the play-house and in the Press. These endeavours had been followed by other movements for protecting the interests of workers in every department of literature. He had taken the first step towards securing international copyright; even as it was copyright for dramatic authors had been already obtained. Towards the close of the thirties, therefore, Bulwer was not so much a Whig as a roving reformer, who had taken the whole area of contemporary life for his province. His latest appearances in the Commons as Liberal member for Lincoln, culminated in his varied and striking successes during 1838. The most serious and solid of these crowned the philanthropic labours of Bulwer's friend, Macaulay, performed five years earlier, dealing with Slave Emancipation. Macaulay secured the reduction of the apprenticeship term from twelve to seven years. In 1838, Bulwer successfully urged the entire remission of such portion of the apprenticeship period as still remained. He only carried his point by a majority of two, and there is good reason for attributing this result immediately to Bulwer's eloquence. At the earlier date already mentioned, Macaulay's oratory had produced a like result on a similar subject. Bulwer and Macaulay have been already seen as friends, if not exact contemporaries, at Cambridge. Parliamentary annals probably afford no other instance in which two college friends, each equally fulfilling the promise of his youth, have to this extent shown themselves personal forces in the division lobby. Bulwer's successful plea for the West Indian negro brought him votes of thanks from the opponents of slavery on both sides of the Atlantic, and was circulated in pamphlet form throughout the world. This triumphant appeal to the deepest instincts of universal humanity could not but eclipse Bulwer's other speeches delivered in the same session. These include his most care-

ful exposition of the ballot, whose defence had formed the keynote of his earliest declaration at St. Stephen's for the Reform Bill. Secret voting had been described as un-English. It did not, however, so ran his chief argument, deserve that stigma more than the *surveillance* and intimidation which prevented the free exercise of the open suffrage. The story of Sheridan, flushed with a triumph at Westminster, rushing to witness another success won by the *School for Scandal* at Drury Lane, has no truth in it; for all Sheridan's plays had been produced before his parliamentary career had begun. Something, however, of the double victory on the same day by a false tradition associated with Sheridan actually fell to the lot of Bulwer. In his own memorable year of 1838, Macready had taken Covent Garden. "I think," said the actor-manager, "we should do well enough if I could only get a play like the *Honeymoon*." "Let me," rejoined Bulwer, "see what I can do." Within a fortnight the *Lady of Lyons* had been written and was in rehearsal. It was produced at Covent Garden February 15, 1838. The author's name was not given on the first night; Bulwer himself, for some time after the curtain had risen, was detained at St. Stephen's by a debate on the ballot. During one of its intervals he rushed off to the theatre. On his way he met a brother member, also a dramatist, the author of *Ion* and then the representative of Reading, who had been present at the *Lady of Lyons* performance, and who was returning to his work in the House. "How," hurriedly asked Bulwer, "went the new play?" "Oh," answered Talfourd, "very well for that sort of thing." Hurrying on, Bulwer reached the play-house at the moment of Claude Melnotte's coming on the stage as one of Napoleon's colonels. As the curtain fell upon an assured success, Lady Blessington congratulated him with tears of joy. "Yes," was his acknowledgment, "it's very well for that sort of thing."

To resume and to complete Bulwer's course as a Radical member, his last return for Lincoln was at the General Election of 1841. By that time he foresaw the monopoly of corn was destined to the same fate as he had himself done something to hasten in the case of the Game Laws and the Stage. In the spring of 1841, Cobden's Free Trade meetings at Manchester, London, and throughout the kingdom had placed beyond a doubt the success of the agitation for Free Trade. Lincoln at once gave in to the popular pressure. Bulwer frankly told the electors his opinion on the subject. Melbourne's method of dealing with the matter was to put a fixed duty both on corn and sugar. "I will not," said Bulwer, "vote for the abolition of the Corn Laws; I will not vote for the Government eight or nine shilling duty, because I believe it to be but a step towards abolition. But I allow you must take the matter of the Corn Laws into serious consideration, and I believe that by a judicious mixture of the fixed duty and the graduated scale you may give great relief to the manufacturers and at the same time not diminish the proper protection to land." The circumstances under which this declaration failed to satisfy the Lincoln electors may be briefly summarized. Since 1839 the Whigs under Melbourne had been steadily losing credit and strength. The Conservative position improved almost daily. The Stockdale and Hansard case had been used by Sir Robert Peel to present himself to the country as the champion of publicity,—the only guarantee, as he called it, of efficiency. He had wound up his defence of the Hansards with the question, "Do you believe that slavery would have been abolished unless in the report of the Commission on the Slave Trade we had published to the world its abuses and horrors?" The speech containing those words drew Bulwer nearer to Peel than he had ever found himself before. From their utterance, indeed, and the effect they produced, dates

Bulwer's progressive conversion to Conservatism, not fully completed before 1852. Meanwhile, Bulwer's final defeat at Lincoln had left the representation of that borough entirely Conservative. With the best-known of its Tory members, the redoubtable and eccentric Colonel Sibthorp, Bulwer had been brought into relationship in his first session as Radical member for St. Ives; for the enfranchisement of tenant farmers was first suggested by Sibthorp after taking counsel with one or two who, like Bulwer, sat on the Radical side, before the Marquis of Chandos had made the subject his own. Had they, therefore, timed their movements better it might have been the Sibthorp-Bulwer instead of the Chandos Clause. At the close of his Whig-Radical stage what, it may be asked, was the general effect produced by Bulwer upon his contemporaries? Neither a morbid sensitiveness nor an invincible self-love was suffered to bias his intellectual judgment, or to soften down his view of defects never, perhaps, quite overcome, and only subdued after a long and laborious course of self-discipline. Here is the Bulwer of 1841 described by himself: "I have little repartee, my memory is slow and my presence of mind not great." Here spoke the modesty of greatness, for Bulwer's presence of mind never failed him, and seemed in its calm collectedness the contradiction of his shy, nervous, irritable temperament. The author of *My Novel* stands also self-portrayed when he describes Randal Leslie's difficulties in holding the ear of a mixed audience; if Leslie attempted to speak at his own intellectual level, he was so subtle and refining as to be almost incomprehensible; if he fell into the fatal error—not uncommon with inexperienced orators—of lowering himself to the intellectual level of his audience, he was only elaborately stupid. No man can speak too well for a crowd, and no man can write too well for the stage; but in neither case should he be rhetorical or case in periods the dry bones of reasoning.

It is to the emotion of the hearers that he who harangues a crowd must address himself ; his eye must brighten in generous sentiment or his lip must expand in the play of animated fancy or genial wit. So far has been heard the Radical supporter of the Whig Government on himself. How had the Liberal member for St. Ives and Lincoln impressed his contemporaries ? Among the dandies on the Liberal benches, the philosophic Sir William Molesworth left even Bulwer far behind him. He, however, quite lacked anything like the noticeable contour of face, the angular features, the eagle beak, and above all the very remarkable lips and chaos of uncombed locks which made every one ask concerning the member for Lincoln who that strange-looking man might be. At the time of this foppish Nazarite's exchanging St. Ives for Lincoln, his eloquence at St. Stephen's had attracted enough attention to make the sightseers at Westminster ask with interest, " Will he speak to-night ? " That, it soon became known, depended on his movements on the assemblage of the House. After taking his seat, often on a bench near Disraeli, by a series of quick side glances, without moving his head, he discovered exactly who happened to be in the House ; next ascertained what had so far happened during the discussion, or how it seemed likely to go. He then disappeared behind the Speaker's chair or into the members' lobby, now rambling through the galleries, now reconnoitring the committee rooms. All this portended an oration. He had, in fact, his speech in his pocket ; if he seemed to be absent rather too long on his last perusal, he was sure to be back at the exact moment for catching the Speaker's eye. When that had been done there followed a performance, in 1831-2, always more or less after the fashion now to be described. As years went on and Bulwer became on friendlier terms with his hearers, as well as less preoccupied with himself, his intonation improved, the extravagance of gesture dis-

appeared, and other mannerisms were pruned away. Bulwer's oratorical effects owed more to his well-proportioned figure than to his artifices of bodily movement. On rising to address his hearers he stretched his form to its full length, as if to impress his audience with its dimensions. The first movement of his figure was backwards, sometimes executed so sharply that he seemed in danger of losing his balance. He began and for some time continued in tones not, indeed, strong, but natural, clear, and sometimes melodious. One knew of his being half through the speech from the voice rising to a high falsetto. At the same time the body was swayed in a forward direction, the head ever being inclined more and more downwards, so that as the peroration drew to a close the forehead found itself no great distance from the knees. Bulwer found a wholesome stimulus in some of the characteristics distinguishing from earlier Houses the parliaments returned after 1832. The greater age and detailed business knowledge of the members at once produced more individual opinion, less of mechanical party voting, and caused the figures of the division list more appreciably than before to depend on the argumentative power of the speeches delivered. At the same time declamation was so increasingly accompanied by vigorous action that there seemed nothing unusual in Bulwer's melodramatic gestures. Thus one among the most eloquent speakers of his day, Whitside, heightened his effects of diction by spasmodic jerks and, as they looked, involuntary shakings suggestive of St. Vitus' dance. At the same time Bulwer, like Disraeli, Gladstone, Bright, and, indeed, all his greatest contemporaries, when speaking at St. Stephen's consciously addressed a far larger audience. The constant improvement in reporting and increase in the number of papers publishing the debates conveyed his oratory to every corner of the country, gave him opportunities and therefore inspiration that had the effect of making his

eloquence in the Reformed House generally of a higher quality than at an earlier date. As for the stilted style and the pedantic affectations discovered by posterity to have been his faults, one has to remember the prevailing artificialism of the age in which he first became a figure at St. Stephen's. The "macaronies" had only just been replaced by the "dandies." Of "swells" or "bucks" persons had scarcely begun to talk. In the Park, at the club, in the drawing-room, as in Parliament, Beau Brummel continued to set the fashion. Not to be affected in manner and stilted in speech was the exception for those occupying Bulwer's place in the public eye. In his later days, in the cut of his clothes, particularly in the shape of his boots, as well as occasionally in his personal bearing, Bulwer long continued to remind one of the Regency. Before his close, however, he assimilated the most marked tendencies of the time into which he lived, not more in details of literary expression than in the business of practical politics. The idiosyncrasies in style and bearing of his most florid period were always compensated by logical closeness of argument, persuasive arrangement of topics, shrewd insight into life and character. Thus, as with pen, so in Parliament, the author of *Pelham* progressively matured into the wise man of the *Caxtons* and of *Kenelm Chillingly*. With the general change in the intellectual taste and literary fashion of the time, the diction in Parliament gained in perspicuity and incisiveness, and may well be studied to-day, not indeed for instruction in the art of debate, but for its impressive and businesslike phrasing.

CHAPTER X

THE SEPARATION, ITS CAUSE AND SEQUEL

Bulwer's baronetcy only his due—Separation from Mrs. Bulwer—The *Julia* apologue—Its application to the author's own matrimonial experiences—Cause of the estrangement of husband and wife—The founding of the penny novelette school of fiction—Its evil influence on Bulwer's public reputation and private happiness—A wife's husband-sketching—Conflicting opinions—The author of *Pelham's* breakdown in health—Bulwer among the doctors and the quacks—Studies of the occult—New era in his literary life—Purpose of the *Pilgrims of the Rhine*—Preparations for *Last Days of Pompeii*—Christopher Wordsworth's assistance—Association of *Rienzi* with modern Italian politics—Bulwer predicts united Italy—Rise of the political romance—Plumer Ward and his works, *De Vere* and *Tremaine*—His opinion of Bulwer-Lytton—Politics in Bulwer's novels—The two *Coningsbys*—Production of *Ernest Maltravers*—Its superiority to the author's earlier literary efforts—Story of Maltravers continued in *Alice*—Renewed championship of the ballot—A fresh field for Bulwer's talents—Dramatic works, 1838-40—Favourable reception in England and America—*Night and Morning*—Its attack upon middle-class hypocrisy—Appearance of *Zanoni*, Bulwer's favourite novel—Vivid sketch of French Revolutionary violence, as the moral disease of individuals.

AT this point it becomes necessary to turn for a time from Bulwer's public life to his private history and domestic adventures. Before his temporary disappearance from the House of Commons (1841) he had written most of the novels which, in the pre-*Caxtons* period, formed the chief foundation of his fame. The slightness and sketchiness of his *England* did not detract from the freshness of its views and the shrewdness of its insight, or prevent John Stuart Mill from justly describing it as noticeably in advance of contemporary thought. His *Athens* (1837) sensibly promoted the English interest in Greek civilization, history, art, and letters first excited by Byron. In politics there was no question of the time about which, on the Whig or Radical side, he had not written or spoken with destructiveness and effect. He had taken a leading part in every

cause for advancing the intellectual, moral, and social welfare of the masses. Nor had he only become the most successful and accomplished among the popular writers of his time. Knebworth would have been, but for Richard Warburton Lytton's carelessness in all matters of business and money, the wealthiest estate in the home counties. Even as matters were, the master of Knebworth must always rank with the chief Hertford territorialists, the Cecils, the Cowpers, and the Lambs; and to Edward Bulwer it was known that on his mother's death the whole of the Knebworth property would go. His party independence only had the effect of raising his political value. Combined with the other considerations now mentioned, it had secured for him, in 1838, a baronetcy from Lord Melbourne.

That honour was not to be shared by the wife whom he had sacrificed much to marry, and whose needs had been his chief motive and support during the time of the drudgery which preceded *Pelham*. Rather than rake up here the dead ashes of ancient scandals, let us see in Bulwer's own words the general trend of events leading up to the legal separation, in 1836. "It is easy," we are told in *The Student*, "for two persons to die joyfully when lovers, but prodigiously difficult, without economizing presence, to live comfortably when married." "Without economizing presence" is, of course, Bulwerian for "without seeing too much of each other," and, as a specimen of an epigram that does not come off, illustrates Bulwer's own tendency to fall into the literary trap, against which he had already warned Disraeli, of only avoiding the commonplace to stumble into the unintelligible. "I fear," said Bulwer in his later days, "that a majority of marriages are unhappy." *The Student*, it has been already seen, contains more of his real self than anything else he wrote. The essayistic variations on the matrimonial theme in which it abounds may well convey a notion of the writer's having

entered upon his wedded life not without a presentiment of its being doomed to failure. The *Julia* apologue in *The Student* * contains, in an impersonal summary, a more trustworthy and in reality not less graphic account of the pitiful quarrel than can be gathered from the partisan narratives written by those who have respectively pleaded the wife's or the husband's cause. The merely betrothed lover depicted by Bulwer sees the epitome of feminine perfections in his adored. Irrevocably committed to Julia he becomes the prey of misgivings. A nervous terror overcomes him as often as he is reminded of having taken her for a life-long companion. He becomes the unresisting sport of chronic irritation and discontent whenever anything in the lady's movement, manner, or turn of speech jars on his fastidious nerves. He resents as an unpardonable offence against himself the lady's failure in earlier days to convince him of her not being at all points qualified for the high honour to which he destined her. Here may be read a parable of the causes producing the miscarriage of Bulwer's matrimonial experiment. The persistent practice of mutual compromise is the only guarantee of wedded happiness. In the present instance the necessary disposition to reciprocal concession had been wanting from the first on both sides. As for Bulwer himself, indulged from his childhood without limit, triumphantly carrying all before him in his youth, and after a short term of galling trial successful and flattered in his manhood, he knew but one law—his own pleasure at the moment. On the other hand, his wife's essentially Irish temperament, fun-loving and buoyant, had supported her under the domestic trials she experienced as a girl, but had not been favourable to the acquisition of those principles of self-discipline and even self-effacement necessary to be mastered by any woman who wished to live peacefully with such a husband.

* Pages 422-7.

Like Julia's lover and lord, in the extracts already made from *The Student*, Bulwer had the idea of improving his bride's natural endowments by finishing her mental education after his own pattern. To that treatment the lady first amazed and then progressively angered him by not showing herself amenable. It has been seen that, Mrs. Lytton's taunts about disparity of age notwithstanding, Rosina Wheeler had been only seven months her suitor's senior. At the time of the fatal knot being tied, she was, however, in tastes, habits, and experience a mature woman of the world, who, ever since she had "come out," had breathed an atmosphere of fashionable compliment, not more on her good looks than on her gifts of mind and pen. Already she had written much verse, and was encouraged by admiring friends to believe herself a poetess. At the same time she was further cultivating the gift of mimicry, on which she prided herself by even now preparing the rough draft of the novels *Mauleverer's Divorce* and *Very Successful*, which, published after the separation, displayed Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's figure caricatured at full length. At the same time, in a diary carefully kept of her home vexations from day to day, she had begun to provide the material eventually turned into printer's copy, and to make a sensational narrative of the sufferings inflicted by one whom, at an early stage of her matronhood, she had learned to consider her evil spirit and tyrant. For this couple there did not exist the common interests so often effective in softening conjugal differences. Bulwer had no home life till long after he became an unattached man, and is seen as the wifeless host of Knebworth. The daughter, born in 1828, had been put out to nurse; she only proved, as she grew up, the cause of increasing bitterness between her parents. At Woodcot, and during the earlier years in Hertford Street, Mrs. Bulwer, always a picturesque figure in her own drawing-room, presided

gracefully over her husband's dinner-table. In the more prosaic and exacting duties of housekeeping she was less successful. Prudent and self-denying to a fault in his personal outlay, Bulwer was the most stern and pitiless of domestic economists. Not, however, without reason did he complain of the slender result shown by the use made of the weekly money allowances entrusted to his wife. A model husband would, in these circumstances, have refrained from angry protest, but have appealed lovingly, or gently, to his wife's better feeling. "Consider," he might have said, "how much toil, even agony, of mind and body every sovereign I place in your hands represents." Instead of this he merely upbraided her with what he cursed for her Irish wastefulness. Always overworked and overworried, he made no attempt at restraining the natural irritability of a nervous constitution which, as Mrs. Bulwer thought, grew into chronic ill-temper periodically venting itself in outbursts of furious passion. As time wore on the lady found fresh occasion for posing as the unappreciated or injured wife. She now tormented herself with a new set of grievances, some at least of which were imaginary. Throughout his life Bulwer had an eccentric way of multiplying the houses he either rented or owned. Whether in the centre of a fashionable quarter, or in the obscurity of a suburb he saw some dwelling that took his fancy, he at once bought or hired it. There for weeks together he would remain in lonely meditation upon the problems of the period, or in solitary study of the plot and characters of a novel or a play. It was not, perhaps, an entirely unnatural or irrational suspicion which suggested the inference that the different domiciles, however rarely visited, might be presided over by ladies without the claim of Mrs. Bulwer, of Hertford Street, to that office.

Both Mrs. Bulwer's personal estimate of her husband, and the quality of Bulwer's own reputation as a writer,

were to be affected by the genuine but occasionally compromising proofs of his popularity which now began to increase and multiply. The penny novelette writers, in copying the man they had taken for their model, of course caricatured him. After they had ceased to attack the felony fictions, Bulwer's Thackerayan critics began and long continued to charge him with only producing, in his most effective passages, the stock personages and incidents of the transpontine melodrama. In these cases it is the literary reputation of the man that had alone suffered. In his relations with his wife he seems in some degree personally to have been victimized by influences and associations like those which had operated to his literary discredit. Preoccupied with the ambitions of her own pen, Mrs. Bulwer may have had as little leisure for the study of her husband's books as for the personal ordering of his house and the nursing of his children. From the gutter novelists, who had caricatured his style, or from her own vivid Irish fancy, she created a picture of him distorting, however unconsciously, many features of the original. She did not wait till Melbourne had rewarded his services by making him the Sir Edward of 1838. To her, from the very beginning of the conjugal feuds, he had been himself the wicked baronet, not so much of his own novels as of those written for the still-room and the pantry. A few specimens of Mrs. Bulwer's husband-sketching may be given. As a bachelor Bulwer had occupied those chambers in the Albany which, formerly belonging to Lord Byron first and to Lord Althorp afterwards, had during the latter tenure been a private meeting-place for the Whig reformers. After his marriage Bulwer still kept on these chambers as a literary and business office. About the time of the separation the deserted but still devoted wife heard of his sickness in that celibate sanctuary, hurried off with the medicine chest, arrived just in time

to see through the half-opened door the white flutter of a departing petticoat, and a tea-table laid for two. Before the separation, while the pair were still living at Berry-mead Priory, Mrs. Bulwer's latest memories included the vision of a furiously ill-tempered lord pursuing her round the table with a carving-knife. After they had ceased to live together, one of the next incidents present to her recollection is her own appearance on the election hustings confronting her unworthy husband and causing that miscreant from very terror to perform a leap from the platform, over the heads of the mob into a flower garden. Those who follow the controversy excited by the details of the rival recollections will find themselves lost in a melodramatic medley of occurrences, partly real perhaps, but to a great extent also imaginary, or at least grotesquely distorted by the disturbing influences of personal partisanship. Mrs. Bulwer convinced herself, and to a great measure persuaded others, that for years she was contending against and pursued by Mephistopheles himself. On the other hand, reminiscents not less trustworthy perhaps than Mrs. Bulwer herself, recall her husband as the good, sad, sentimental man with a past darkening his whole life, misunderstood and unhappy it may be, but always noble and as good of heart as he might be sometimes gloomy in manner. Like Dickens among his contemporaries, Bulwer separated from his wife that he might not destroy his intellectual energies by the wear and tear of an uncongenial partnership. The same unhappy lot had been that of Shakespeare and Milton. Notwithstanding Voltaire's dramatic contribution to the subject, Xantippe's charges against her husband, Socrates, have still to be cleared up. Among his most devoted admirers it remains an open question whether the evangelist or his wife was really to blame for the circumstances attending her husband's dismissal of Mrs. John Wesley. In the present instance the one thing certain is

that if Edward Bulwer was to continue his career, literary or political, he must deliver himself from the disabling society of a wearing wife. By what stages this necessity had been reached, and how exactly on both sides responsibility should be portioned out, there is not and there never can be trustworthy evidence to show.

The relief of deliverance, in 1836, from the vexatious companionship which he had made the mistake of securing for himself ten years earlier was followed by a renewal of Bulwer's energies for all kinds of work, but did not avert a serious and prolonged physical failure whose early signs showed themselves so far back as 1830, amid the grinding toil of the Woodcot period. Anxieties about his health now, and for some time afterwards, reflected themselves in his writings. "We do not sufficiently," he reminds us, "reflect upon our outward selves."* With a will at least as powerful as his brain, Bulwer united an iron constitution. A little more attention, therefore, to his bodily well-being, a proper allowance of time for his meals, and a wiser economy of nerve force would have warded off the successive bouts of ill-health which followed the close of his wedded existence, and which only ended in time enough for his return to Parliament in 1852. The remedies and regimen that, without completely overcoming his pains, helped to re-establish him in tolerable comfort were chiefly of his own devising. Their prominence in his writings entitles them to be described as marking an epoch, not only in his physical state, but in his intellectual development and literary course. Finding the doctors at fault he took to studying medicine for himself. In his earlier years he had dipped a good deal into mental science. His later researches taught him to see in physiology only another department of that branch of learning to which psychology belongs. When he wanted the advice of men he sought it, not in Harley Street or Cavendish Square, but in one of

* *The Student*. "Ill-health and its Consolations," p. 133.

the small thoroughfares leading out of Regent Street. Here lived an unorthodox healer calling himself *Nature's Grand Restorer*. To him Bulwer entrusted his person, softly soliloquizing the while: "If this great operator cannot rub me into health, he may rub me a little sooner into my grave; next to a long life what blessing like a quick death?" "A visit to a quack," he comments, "is a very pleasurable excitement. There is something piquant in the disdain for prudence with which we deliver ourselves up to that illegitimate sportsman of human lives who kills us without a qualification." "So," he adds, "I went to the quack from exactly the same feelings which sent one's ancestors to the wizard; that is, prepared to expect miracles in one's own person." The next hygienic adventure secured for Bulwer the distinction of being the first to familiarize the English public with the water cure. His article on the subject in the *New Monthly* magazine,* reprinted as a pamphlet or booklet, may still be seen at the Hydropathic institutions which, but for Bulwer, would not abound and flourish to-day. Claridge's treatise on the *Remedial Virtues of Water*, shown by Priessnitz's method in Silesia, decided Bulwer to try the treatment as administered nearer home. He curtailed his continental search after health and went to Malvern. There the wet-sheet packing, alternating with douches and shampooing, proved, if not beneficial, at least innocuous. Meanwhile, he applied himself to his study of the medicine books with something like the energy of despair. At this point a fresh turn to his therapeutic researches was given by a memory of his youth and of the revelation then received by him concerning the strange connection between mind and matter. In Bulwer's Cambridge days acquaintance with Chauncy Hare Townshend had first deeply interested him in the phenomena of the borderland separating the unseen from the seen; Townshend had also introduced him to John Elliotson, the

* *Pamphlets and Speeches*, "Knebworth" edition, p. 48, etc.

doctor whose professional prospects had suffered from his belief in animal magnetism. The force of imagination had always kept Bulwer from materialism and attracted him, once more to quote his own words, to the philosophy of faith. The physicians' ill-success with his maladies in his present quest for nervous and physical health prompted him to look for relief impartially from the healing forces of the visible and invisible universe. In due time Bulwer regained his vigour, thanks not to his examination of the various cures, orthodox or irregular, prescribed for the ills to which flesh is heir, but to his own vigorous system and careful dieting. The medical or quasi-medical knowledge picked up by him during this period supplied him with material for several magazine essays, none of much permanent value perhaps, but all exemplifying his versatile industry and some that now read like rehearsals for the novel he already had in his mind, *Zanoni*, and clearly pre-saging his later romances of the mystic and occult. Such are the discussions in *Caxtoniana* on the *Normal Clairvoyance of the Imagination*, on the *Distinction between Active Thought and Reverie*, and on the *Spirit in which New Theories should be received*.

The literary products of the interval out of Parliament, from 1841 to 1852, were not less satisfactory than the physical results of that period; because they brought about his reappearance in Parliament, no longer as Whig or Liberal, but as a Conservative county member, and in the near future a cabinet minister elect. The *Pilgrims of the Rhine* had been published in 1834, shortly before his first visit to Germany. Together with the *Last Days of Pompeii*, written in the same year, it was always considered by its author to mark a new era in his literary life. "In all my earlier novels," to quote his own words, "I have observed rather than imagined, dealt with the ordinary surface of life, without attempting to soar above it or to

dive beneath. I first sought to transfer from a fairer fancy more ideal images in *Pilgrims of the Rhine* and the *Last Days of Pompeii*." For other reasons each of these books has a personal interest of its own. *Eugene Aram* incidentally, as has been seen, brought Edward Bulwer into immediate relations with Thomas Hood. In the *Confessions of a Water Patient*, already quoted from, occurs a touching tribute to him who sang the song of the shirt. "And Hood ! Who remembers not the tender pathos, the exquisite humanity which spoke from his darkened room ?" Soon after Hood's poem about the Lynn schoolmaster had proved of some service to Bulwer when preparing his sixth romance ; the *Eugene Aram* novelist made the personal acquaintance of the *Eugene Aram* poet. Some time before the *Pilgrims of the Rhine* appeared, Bulwer mentioned it to Hood as forthcoming, adding, "And there is another aspect of the river, inviting more humorous treatment from qualified hands." In 1840, partly as a result of its author's residence in Germany, partly too, it may be, of Bulwer's hints, appeared Hood's *Up the Rhine*. For many years these two volumes in their original English or in German versions were found side by side at every inn and on every bookstall between Cologne and Mayence. The string that binds into a garland the wild flowers cast upon a grave is Bulwer's own definition of the purpose with which he wrote the *Pilgrims*. Its chief reflection of the writer's experiences is suggested by the words in which one of the characters, Trevylyan, attributes to men of letters a peculiar temptation to the base vices of jealousy and unwillingness to admire. Then follow some other expressions of Trevylyan which read like a condensed paraphrase of Macaulay's exhortations against taking to heart the detraction of all the dunces who resented *Paul Clifford's* success. The *Last Days of Pompeii* may owe something of its sustained if not still increasing popularity to the various dramatic

versions of the book, not confined entirely to the English stage. As a philosophical study of character it is without the delicate subtlety which its author might justly claim for his other work published in the same year (1834), *Pilgrims of the Rhine*. Its interest comes less from the interplay and conflict of human motive than from situation and incident,—the noonday excursion on the Campanian seas, the temple of Isis with the hidden machinery, the funeral pomp and dirge of Apaecides. The verdict, however, of three generations of readers has recorded the artistic skill with which the novelist has surrounded his pages with a fateful atmosphere, prognosticating in every incident the calamity coming upon the doomed city. So well has the novelist managed all that one instinctively sees in Lydon's death an omen of the approaching catastrophe. The crash, it is felt, may now at any moment come. Nor were the instructions of the author needed to make the reader watch for the black cloud hanging like a solid firmament, the lightning flash which relieves the darkness, the trembling earth, the tortured sea, the downpour of ashes and rock. More awful still are the lava torrent and the tide of human passion and impotence which seem to flow with it. Nydia may suggest Goethe's Mignon in *Wilhelm Meister* and has, no doubt, her anachronisms of sentiment. But the pictures of early Christian life are true to the period, and the introduction of the young man of Nain is a bold touch, pardonable because it is effective. The conditions under which this romance was written were, if in some respects unfavourable enough, not without their compensations. Perfect command of his own temper, or the power of translating one half his own philosophic maxims into practice would have enabled Bulwer patiently to bear his wife's insatiable inquisitiveness and unappeasable love of power in small things, never so vexatiously displayed as during the composition of this story. Naturally

impatient and irritable, he gave vent to his anger and disgust at these traits in the lady after a fashion that removed the last possibility of their living peaceably together. Alternately depressed and infuriated at home, Bulwer found social solace and literary encouragement in intercourse with a Cambridge junior, but life-long friend. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, had met him at Rome, and afterwards came to him at Naples. With Milnes was travelling the great Cambridge scholar Christopher Wordsworth, author of the Latin grammar, who died Bishop of Lincoln, 1885. Wordsworth was not only omniscient upon all classical subjects, but a great English man of letters with perfect literary taste. With him for his guide Bulwer explored the then comparatively unfamiliar site and ruins of Pompeii; while his companion's inexhaustible knowledge of archæological detail and glowing power of scholarly description recreated and repeopled the ancient city and brought back the old civilization as with the freshness of yesterday. Thus were secured the topographical accuracy and social verisimilitude which make sightseers to the Bay of Naples still examine the disinterred columns, villas, and streets with Bulwer's novel in their hands as the best of all written ciceroni.

On all periods of Italian history Christopher Wordsworth was a sound authority. His conversations with Bulwer contained the germ that a little later grew into the *Last of the Tribunes*. The future bishop safeguarded the novelist against the conventional mistake of seeing in the papal Church the persistent enemy of social reform and enlightenment. At the same time Wordsworth taught him that a reforming pope can only be a lucky accident, and that a series of reforming popes is an historical impossibility. Six years before Bulwer's *Rienzi* appeared, Mary Russell Mitford had treated the same subject in one of her Italian tragedies; in this play the central incident of the plot is a

love intrigue between Rienzi's kinswoman and one of his opponents. Bulwer's book attenuates it into a quite subordinate episode. For the rest, the same materials and authorities guided Bulwer to conclusions different not only from those reached by Miss Mitford, but by Gibbon and Sismondi. To-day many who renew their acquaintance with the *Last of the Tribunes* will be struck less by its central figure than by the recently verified accuracy of its historical and political forecast of national deliverance to be achieved hereafter by the House of Savoy. In the southern region of Italy Bulwer, of course, saw a land of beauty formed by nature for the garden of Europe as well as the mart of the Mediterranean ; man, however, had invariably kept it in the rear of Italian progress. On the other hand, the van of Italian civilization has always been led by Sardinia. Here, therefore, Bulwer predicted would be found the nucleus and the nurse of a rejuvenated race. There were in other Italian states a people fallen, priding themselves only on their past, lazy amidst ruins. The north, on the other hand, possessed a population enterprising, vigorous, still youthful, and visibly maturing itself again into muscle and bloom. Pass next from the more purely Italian parts of this district about Genoa into Piedmont ; you see a soil more scientifically cultivated, a peasantry better housed, towns of improved build, of cleaner and busier thoroughfares. In Bulwer's day, the sovereign power throughout these districts was that of Charles Albert. It was to the posterity of the Sardinian King that Bulwer looked for a royal statesman, who on the firm foundation of a vigorous Savoy would build up a strong and united Italy. This prediction has, of course, been fulfilled to the very letter ; for it was Victor Emmanuel II who established the throne, and whose descendant, seated on it to-day, has his place among the great European powers.

In the Bulwerian fiction of 1834-5 any reference to State

affairs must from the subject matter necessarily apply to foreign politics. The political novel properly so called had been introduced into English literature at the time of Bulwer's leaving Cambridge by Plumer Ward. Born in 1775, Ward elaborated the characters and the incidents of a time considerably earlier than was taken by Disraeli; nor, indeed, have these two writers much in common. Primarily Ward's stories deal with the same aspects of fashionable life as those described by Mrs. Witterly's favourite authors. The politics have seldom any organic connection with the plot. A French rather than an English novelist first suggested to Ward the introduction of full-length political figures into his stories. During the first half of the nineteenth century Balzac's *Petits Ménages d'une Femme Vertueuse* had been the sensation of the Paris season; in this novel one of the chief episodes is formed by the parting and reunion of Calypt and Beatrice. The French fashionable public insisted on identifying these two with the Countess D'Adoult and Franz Liszt, the Paganini of the piano. Taking a hint from Balzac, Plumer Ward, in the *De Vere* and *Tremaine* caricatures, tried to pique London curiosity after the Paris fashion. There was, however, even more of philosophy and theology than of politics in Ward's stories. Southey commended Ward's novels, not because they were political, but because they supplied an answer to Shaftesbury's and Bolingbroke's *Deism*; for many, he added, who will not read Berkeley and Skelton will read *Tremaine*. Bishop Copleston at once identified the hero of the story with the morally immaculate Spencer Perceval, adding, "I have derived more pleasure from it than from anything I have yet seen called a novel." The Cleveland of *Tremaine* generally passed for Chatham. The refrain and moral of the story may be described as the bad effects of the party spirit upon individuals. Party is indeed shown to be a kind of demoniacal magic, poison-

ing and corroding everything it touches. Benjamin Disraeli was equally enthusiastic in his praise of *De Vere*, selecting the hero's first interview with Sir W. Flowerdale as a model of literary portraiture ; Clayton, he said, is excellently conceived and admirably sustained. So are the sagacious Herbert, the classic Wentworth, and the timid Oldcastle. As for the ladies, Georgiana struck Disraeli as the most engaging woman to whom he had been introduced in fiction ; while Lord Mowbray's death is called actually sublime. Plumer Ward's statesmen, however, are shown too little in the world of action, and too much in retirement. It is as if Thucydides were brought before us, not when engaged on the work which immortalized him, but occupied with his crops and cattle on his little farm in Thrace ; or as if the scenery amid which Xenophon was shown were the few acres cultivated by him for his amusement at Scillus. Whether Bulwer endorsed Disraeli's estimate of Ward one does not know. Ward's opinion of Bulwer is, however, on record, and in these terms : " He is the most accomplished writer of the most accomplished era in English letters, practising all classes and styles of composition, novelist, dramatist, poet, historian, moral philosopher, essayist, critic, political pamphleteer—in each superior to all others, and only rivalled in each by himself." In short, as a phrase still more famous has it, " None but himself can be his parallel."* As political novelists Bulwer and Disraeli are no more like each other than the earliest performer in that literary line, Plumer Ward, resembles the other fashionable romancists most in vogue when he began to write. In the drawing-room fiction before Ward's day, politics were entirely subordinated to fashion. The prominence given by Ward to his parliament men is quite in-

* This conceit, having fallen from its old place in the list of familiar quotations, occurs exactly as it is now given in Theobald's *Double Falsehood*. Rather differently put, the idea, first found in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, was adapted by other Elizabethan or Restoration writers.

dependent of their standing with the polite world. In Bulwerian story the hero when political has generally adopted public life by way of cure for a private sorrow. In Disraeli he is a man with a mission, urged into the House by the call of duty or by aptitudes so conspicuous for serving, perhaps saving, his country that his friends give him no peace till he finds a place at Westminster. Bulwer, therefore, has attempted nothing like *Coningsby*,* the man to whom the strife of St. Stephen's, the bustle and the gossip of the Lobbies become by habit a part of existence. Nor, as was done by Disraeli even in his last novel *Endymion*, has Bulwer depicted at the successive stages of his progress a single character in his advance from small beginnings to the Treasury Bench. On the other hand, nearly all Bulwer's novels have something of politics in them, and abound in touches here and there recalling the features of individual statesmen. Thus cabinet ministers and ambassadors crowd the pages of Bulwer's earliest novel belonging to the Victorian era, *Ernest Maltravers*. Neither the chief springs of action nor the central episodes have anything to do with State matters. Such political meaning as the book possesses comes from its showing the same concern for the condition of England question that inspired so much of *Coningsby*, in 1844, and that expressed itself in the *Young England* party. To this coterie Bulwer never belonged; he was not in Parliament during its existence (1842-6), and in those years saw nothing of its moving spirit, Disraeli. The novel now reached indicates a distinct stage in its writer's literary development. Its plot, scenery, local colour, and general tone are significant of the transition from the pure romance of history, in the *Last Days of Pompeii* and *Rienzi*, towards the story of English provincial life shortly

* From Plumer Ward, Bulwer-Lytton received not only compliments, but the information that long before the publication of Disraeli's *Coningsby*, 1844, Sir Egerton Brydges (1762-1837) had written also a long since forgotten and never well known fiction bearing the same title.

to be illustrated by *Night and Morning* and at a much later date by the *Caxtons*. In the adventures of Maltravers the earliest readers of the novel insisted on seeing not less of its author's personal experiences than nine years earlier *Pelham* had been supposed to reveal. Thus Alice Darvil was generally identified with the Lucy D—— who had been the object of Bulwer's boyish attachment at Ealing. Against that notion the novelist entered a protest in his preface. If, he said, Alice Darvil has any prototype in real life it certainly was not Lucy D—— but another lady, who, had she still lived, would have been more than seventy, and whose grandchildren, in 1837, were considerably older than Bulwer himself. What, if any, are the traces of self-portraiture to be found in *Maltravers*? The author belonged to an old and wealthy family; he took for his hero a man of genius, committed to fierce but ennobling struggles, not with the poverty and want that so often harass talent and merit, but with the temptations arising out of wealth and lassitude. It only wanted a suspicion of matrimonial infelicity thrown in to make the work not a novel, but an autobiography. That obviously had been omitted by Bulwer to put the public off the scent. At the same time the book is designedly realistic. Bulwer, indeed, confessed to having taken much of his tale, and many of his characters, from everyday existence. Nor is it to be wondered at that *Maltravers* found its way more directly to the popular heart and mind than had been done even by the most successful of the novels which preceded it. If Maltravers himself is, at points, somewhat of a melodramatic hero, the background bringing out his figure in impressive relief is one of everyday domestic incident or personal adventure. At the same time, there is more of movement and variety than hitherto Bulwer had often given. The plot naturally arises from the circumstances in which the characters find themselves. The scenery and the succession of events are

in artistic congruity with the men and women depicted. The local colours are well mixed. The interest is naturally sustained and without any recourse to artificially striking events. The touches of humour are easy as well as abundant, seldom missing the effect because for the most part visibly produced by the play of mind with mind and the friction of wit against wit. Above all things the writing is excellent; for paragraphs and pages together the reader agreeably recognizes the successful student of Voltaire. There is a refreshing absence of Latinisms or Ciceronian involutions. Thought and diction both show the sympathy in which mind and pen now worked with all sections of his fellow-creatures. The reader of *Maltravers* spontaneously sees in his author, not the studious exquisite of Versailles or the harassed hack of Woodcot, but the genially observant pedestrian who had, at a pace leisurely enough to be instructive, tramped through most parts of the kingdom, fishing-rod or staff in hand, and knapsack on back. Recalling those of all classes whom he had met during these tours, vividly realizing their daily troubles and needs, directly for their benefit as if he addressed them personally, he set himself in *Maltravers* to work out the science of life, to illustrate and inculcate a desire for the good, a passion for the honest, a yearning after the true. All that he said he meant. If he be charged with truism or platitude, he could not better have described the principles deduced from his experience as teaching the safe and practical philosophy which consists of fortitude to bear, serenity to enjoy, and faith to look beyond. Here at least is a well balanced phrase, charged with practical wisdom, calculated profitably to lodge itself in minds not yet, by platform maxims and newspaper essays, demoralized into suspicion of Solomon's wisdom and Bacon's apothegms. Sentiments of this kind may be despised as cant appeals to the virtuous sympathies of the gallery. [But the general reader of 1837 had not yet

dosed himself with the secular sermons or catchwords of Carlyle and Emerson; nor had Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* begun to inspire *Recreations of a Country Parson* or *Essays of the Gentle Life*. Thus the early Victorian era, as yet not over-lectured, could be impressed by the wise sayings scattered through *Maltravers* and opening with the author's own confession: "Nine times out of ten it is over the Bridge of Sighs that we pass the narrow gulf from youth to manhood. From an interval usually occupied by an ill-placed or disappointed affection, we advance" (as Bulwer had done himself) "to find ourselves a new being. The intellect has become hardened by the fire which it has traversed. The mind profits by the wrecks of every passion." Among the purifying and strengthening flames submitted to by *Maltravers* were those of religion. Out of the benign and simple elements of Scripture he conjured up for himself a fanaticism gloomy and intense. He lost sight of God the Father, to dream day and night only of God the Avenger. There thus seemed every probability that Ernest *Maltravers* would die in a mad-house, or at best succeed to the delusions, without the cheerful intervals, of Cowper. The first agency of rescue from that fate is supplied by Lumley Ferrars. This was a young man of most powerful and acute mind, of animated manner, of high physical spirits, of profound confidence in his own resources, of determined assurance, fond of schemes, strategy, and plots, and seldom failing to obtain astonishing influence over his fellow-creatures. The contrast between the sentimental, speculative, dreamy *Maltravers*, and the clever, callous Ferrars forms the keynote of the story, as with variations, more effectually because more easily presented than anything yet done by Bulwer, it holds and deepens the reader's interest from the fifteenth chapter to the close. Lumley Ferrars personifies among other things the hard worldly wisdom which rejects the moral restraints and the spiritual

solace of Revelation. The same idea had already been introduced into *Falkland*. In *Maltravers* the thought is worked out with a facility and force illustrating the author's intellectual and literary advance since he began to grope his way towards the public with *Falkland*. Thirteen years after *Maltravers* Bulwer put much sensible advice about training children into the *Caxtons*. Even at this earlier date he had something to say on the subject. "Philosophers," he remarks, "may advocate abstract education from the cradle, but it is quite enough to attend to an infant's temper and to correct that cursed predilection for telling fibs, which falsifies Reid's absurd theory about innate propensities to truth, and makes the common epidemic of the nursery." At the same time Bulwer shows his practical good sense, as well as sympathy with childhood, in some further remarks to the following effect. Generally, in the case of children as of adults, it takes two people to tell a lie, white or black. The suggestion of a threat in the questioner's voice or manner causes confusion or fear to the interrogated person; as a consequence the obligation of truth is forgotten in the panic or hurry of the moment. Continuing this line of thought Bulwer adds: "Considering, too, how seldom habits of accurate observation are taught children, or are practised by adults, lying of any kind may be seen as often as not to originate in physical or intellectual causes rather than moral depravity." Maltravers himself reappears in *Alice*, produced during the same year as the story just mentioned. Here Maltravers is minutely portrayed in his efforts to ameliorate the lot of his peasantry, and in his conversations about Labour Schools and Poor Rates with De Montaigne. Both interlocutors start from rather pessimistic premises, both after a long argument agree in the conclusion that the good done by a reforming landlord like Maltravers in a single village may, by a well-chosen and conscientious legislature, be

spread throughout a kingdom.* In *Alice*, too, Bulwer returned to the advocacy of that "point of the Charter" which he had first made his own in the House of Commons. Six years earlier Bulwer, as member for St. Ives, had declared that voting to be free must be secret. In 1837 the author of *Alice* calls the ballot the corollary from the Catholic Relief Bill. The next step, he grants, will be practically universal suffrage, and this means democracy. As to the relative merits of government by the many and by a privileged order, the wisest, he admits, cannot agree, nor does he attempt to decide. The year of *Maltravers* and *Alice*, 1837, was also marked by Bulwer's first and only failure as a playwright, with the *Duchesse de la Vallière*. Yet this was not, as has been said, hissed off the stage, but merely withdrawn on its ninth performance. After the studies in practical statesmanship, imparting to *Maltravers* and *Alice* something like the interest of history, Bulwer, in 1838, returned to pure romance; *Leila* and *Calderon* were both first published as costly picture books; each, too, was designedly an exercise preparatory to beginning the more ambitious romance, which did not appear till 1842, *Zanoni*.

While, however, still brooding over *Zanoni*, Bulwer had achieved his first great success in a species of composition, his first attempt at which narrowly escaped ignominious failure. Not even Macready, as Marquess de Bragelonne, could secure a run for the *Duchesse de la Vallière*. For a fortnight, in 1835, it was played to inappreciative audiences at Covent Garden. Withdrawn then, it has never since reappeared on the stage. This happened during the period in which the theatre was beginning to enjoy the favour of fashion, as well as the notice of respectability. In 1832 Lord Francis Egerton's tragedy, *Catherine of Cleves*, at Covent Garden showed Fanny Kemble, as was thought by

* *Alice*, "Knebworth" edition, pp. 254-5.

no less sound a critic than Henry Grenville, to more advantage than any other of the new pieces she was then about to take with her to America. Three years later Thomas Noon Talfourd's *Ion* won for its author on the stage a reputation rivalling that already achieved on the platform and at the Bar. Bulwer had resolved to show himself as a playwright at least the equal of the two writers with whom he sat in Parliament. A new theatrical era had set in when he began to write. The old traditions of idea and dialogue were losing their hold both before and behind the foot-lights. The poetic drama had become assured of favour, but only on condition of its being not merely poetic but genuinely dramatic as well. The necessary qualifications were forthcoming in Bulwer, who gradually mastered his new business so thoroughly that his plays are remembered and acted to-day, while those of Talfourd, Sheridan Knowles, and others are forgotten. The dramatic author wanted at the beginning of the Victorian Age was one well versed in literature, conversant with stage requisites and scenic effects. In addition to that it was necessary he should be a man of the world, reflecting from personal observation those constant qualities of human nature which would compel the attention alike of pit and gallery, boxes and stalls. Bulwer may not have been the ideal dramatist of this period. He did, however, succeed where many failed. As literature, it is said, what he wrote for the stage was generally poor ; his highest merit is the cleverness of keen though shallow observation. Scenic situations give some of his plays an appearance of strength ; but he has not added a character to the English repertoire, or a phrase to the national wealth of national colloquialisms. Here, no doubt, there is a deficiency. Still, when all has been said against him, Bulwer remains the only considerable British author who has succeeded in writing plays that keep the stage. Macready's Shakespearian revivals at

Covent Garden owed a good deal to their association with the *Lady of Lyons*. So, on the other hand, was that play helped by Helen Faucit's Pauline ; while the secret of *Richelieu's* success was Macready's impersonation of the Cardinal. The dawn of the Victorian Age had already proved auspicious to Bulwer in that it had produced the best written as yet and most generally interesting of all his novels in *Ernest Maltravers*, and the best of his serious prose pieces in *Athens*. The *Lady of Lyons* (1838) continued and even improved this run of literary luck. Alike in conception and execution, the *Lady of Lyons* bore the peculiar stamp of its author's mind. The plot may be inconsistent, even improbable. Its development imprints a wholesome lesson on the popular mind. Its personages embody the varied and even mutually antagonistic qualities, whose blending Bulwer delighted to display, and which he never harmonized more skilfully than in his most successful drama. To what has already been said about the *Lady of Lyons* may now be added a brief record of its reception in the United States as well as in England. On the other side of the Atlantic Bulwer's shorter pieces, especially in the *Student*, had always received much attention. His *Monos and Daimonos* had given E. A. Poe the idea of his *William Wilson*. Poe took the opportunity of repaying this obligation by a noticeable criticism of the *Lady of Lyons* on its appearance in New York. It is, he exclaimed, not only, as it deserves to be, popular, but it cannot fail to be popular so long as the people have a heart. The well-phrased sentiments of which it is full have a soul-stirring sound. It proceeds rapidly and consequentially ; never for one moment is the interest allowed to flag. The incidents, admirably conceived, are not less skilfully wrought into execution. The *dramatis personæ* one and all are natural. With the exception, indeed, of Pauline, they may be wanting in marked individuality. What has been thought about the "Lady" herself

by the leading representatives of the most famous parts of the English stage? From Macready and Helen Faucit to Henry Irving and Ellen Terry they have all recognized in her a character who might have been one of Shakespeare's women. The heroine of the drama has indeed incurred the reproach of being weak, mercenary, and at times ignoble. Her feminine charm can scarcely be said to suffer from her not being another *Clarissa Harlowe*. The one defect in her character, as in the play, is her consent to marriage with Beauseant, while still aware of Claude's existence and continued love. The fault of this episode is the greater because it seems so out of harmony with the whole genius of the play. Just a year after the *Lady of Lyons*, *Richelieu* was played for the first time at Covent Garden, March 7, 1839; it gave Macready an opportunity, as the Cardinal, of repeating his success with Claude Melnotte. From Macready's day to Sir Henry Beerbohm Tree's, the hero of the *Lady of Lyons* has remained, like Hamlet, a part played at least once by every actor on his road to fame. Macready's advice as his private friend no doubt helped his stage writing, but not more than Macready's elocutionary lessons in later years were the cause of the pulpit successes won by Canon J. B. Fleming and other clergymen. The faults of the drama are the same as have been charged against some of the novels; there is too much talk and too little action; especially when the medium of the dialogue is verse. The prose passages, having more vigour and vivacity, produce a far better effect. The year of *Richelieu* was also that which introduced to the Haymarket public, October 31, 1839, the *Sea Captain*, revived many years afterwards by the title of the *Rightful Heir*. Some incidental reference to this play will be necessary a little later. The Great Exhibition year of 1851 associated Bulwer, in his capacity of dramatic author, with all that was most brilliant in contemporary society, letters, and art. His project of a literary

and artistic guild never came to much. The drama, *Not so bad as we seem*, written by Bulwer for its support, is still remembered as one among the great features in the most memorable of London seasons ever known. Rehearsed privately in some Knebworth theatricals, it was afterwards, May 16, 1851, performed before Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort in the temporary theatre at Devonshire House, Piccadilly. The royal pair's patronage of Macready's farewell appearance at Drury Lane began to promote Prince Albert's popularity; that was appreciably increased by the Court attendance at the Devonshire House play, which first introduced its author to Palace favour. The actors on this great day included Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, John Tenniel, so many years the great artist of *Punch*, Frank Stone, the Royal Academician Marcus Stone's father; Douglas Jerrold, John Forster, Peter Cunningham the London archæologist, Westland Marston the dramatist, Charles Knight, R. H. Horne, author of *Orion*, and Mark Lemon, the editor of *Punch*. "Undertake," Bulwer-Lytton had said at Knebworth on the first discussion of the matter, "to act the play yourselves and I engage to write it." Within two months or less of the suggestion being made, *Many Sides to a Character*, the other title of *Not so bad as we seem*, had been performed with a cast that included all the names then best known in London art or letters. It yielded three thousand pounds to the dramatist's favourite but unsuccessful project of the Knebworth *Guild*. Of all Bulwer's writings for the stage, *Money* (1840) is the least artificial, but its merits are dramatic rather than literary. This was admitted by no one more frankly than in his later years by its author himself. "The points that I tried to make in the dialogue too often miss fire. The repartees intended to bring the house down have a provoking way of not coming off." Nor are there in it any of those situations imparting perennial

vitality and charm to Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. As a comedy, however, of character and manners it retains, and will probably never lose, some hold of the public both on and off the stage. The heart, life, and humour belonging to *Money* are qualities considered by the most practical critics to defy time. With Sir H. B. Tree for Graves, a George Alexander or a Forbes Robertson for Sir J. Vesey, a Kate Rorke or Lena Ashwell for Clara Douglas, an H. B. Irving for Sir Fred Blount, and a suitable Stout, *Money* would be as popular in 1910 as when, more than two generations ago, its author did so much by his genius and sympathy towards rehabilitating a discredited stage with upper and middle-class playgoers. *Money* was first produced at the Haymarket, under Benjamin Webster's management, on December 8, 1840. Its life, now covering the best part of a century, has been periodically renewed by frequent revivals. Among such of these as took place in the nineteenth century, the most interesting and important was that which the author himself survived to see. The Bancrofts went to the Haymarket in 1880. Some years earlier, while still at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, they had decided on reproducing *Money*. They considered a few alterations advisable; chief amongst them was the playing of Act IV without change of scene from one room to another. Lord Lytton, as he had become in 1866, at once assented on condition of first seeing any modification proposed in particular lines. It was not, he said, a few verbal cuts here and there on which he should think it worth while to cavil with accomplished and skilled arrangement. Subsequently, through Mrs. Lehmann, Lord Lytton expressed his appreciation of the remarkable judgment and ability which had helped *Money* to a revival of extraordinary success, and one justly bringing great fame to the Bancroft management. After 1822 Bulwer was a regular though moderate smoker. Perhaps to-day the most

entertaining and not the least instructive part of *Money* is its description of the very gradual and slow degrees by which tobacco won social toleration. Few clubs had regular smoking-rooms; Bulwer's own chief resort, the *Athenæum*, continued to be without such accommodation till quite late in his visits to the place. Long after the *Alfred* had become the smart club of the day the objection of the non-smokers to the tobacco chamber, though at the top of the house and in a back attic, led to the closing of the place. On the other hand, snuff-boxes formed part of a club's necessary furniture. *Money* illustrates all the humours of the time; one of its chief hits is the frequent call for the snuff-box by an irritable old clubman, who growls that, because this delicacy was furnished gratuitously, the steward or the committee took care that, instead of tobacco, its constituents should be coffee dust and dirt. Of Bulwer's other dramatic writings there are in *Walpole* a directness, vigour, actuality, and characteristic turns of dialogue that may, perhaps, yet some day introduce it to the footlights. The acting qualities of *Darnley* were tested on the London stage by Mr. John Hare at the Court, and in Vienna at the Burg Theatre in 1878. Afterwards the first Earl Lytton, when residing in Paris, hoped his father's *Darnley* might be acted by a French company. Even in Paris *Darnley* never passed beyond the reading stage.

Night and Morning (1841) appeared two years before Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but in the preface to the 1845 edition of this novel Bulwer describes it as designed to satirize and expose the hypocrisies of the respectable, as was done by Dickens in the person of Pecksniff. Molière, he added, was, of course, the master who in *Tartuffe* had supplied Dickens and himself with models for their respective types of canting villainy. The Pecksniff of *Night and Morning* is Robert Beaufort, the man of decorous phrase and bloodless action, the systematic time-server in whom virtue

itself forgives the lack of all that is generous, warm, and noble because of his superficial propriety. In *Night and Morning*, however, Bulwer aimed at something else than presenting to the world his own reincarnation of the French dramatist's veneered scoundrel. In Parliament and on platform he had been from the first the advocate of a free press, of free libraries, and of good books purchasable by the masses at the lowest price for which they could be produced. The lessons, however, that it concerned the multitude to learn were more sternly practical than could be derived from writing alone. Again and again Bulwer undesignedly anticipates Matthew Arnold's saying in *Literature and Dogma*, "Conduct is three-fourths of human life." To inspire and guide conduct rather than to cultivate mind was, in *Night and Morning*, what Bulwer first desired to do. Not by the repetition of fine sentiments, but by the contagious power of well-presented, stimulating examples did he try in this novel to fit the nerves of man for the strife below, and to lift his aspirations in healthful confidence above. Virtuous action may be its own reward; it can only be ensured by experience. Books that have no strengthening and elevating effect upon practice are no better than, in religion, the faith without works. Two generations of readers have seen in *Night and Morning* one among the most interesting of Bulwer's narrative melodramas. Its characters, its situations, and its conclusions were considered by the author himself likely to be more useful than anything he had written by helping an impressionable reader to that stern sacrifice of self which transcends in value anything to be gleaned from the odds and ends of popular philosophy. Resolute manhood and tender womanhood are at least throughout this book presented in a guise, as its author says, to put to shame the feeble hermaphrodites of our sickly civilization. So far as literary exposition and illustration can inculcate the practice of

moral precepts, this book enforces the two cardinal virtues of the Bulwerian gospel—"Be honest in temptation, and in adversity believe in God."

"Which of all your novels do you like best?" This question, put to Bulwer in later years by the fourth Earl of Carnarvon, received the answer, "I think, on the whole, *Zanoni*." To such an enquiry no author can ever have given a more thoroughly characteristic response. Graphic description of stirring historic scenes had always been Bulwer's forte. Speculation in the supernatural had become his foible. Both elements were combined with literary skill and pictorial effect in *Zanoni*. The germ of this long-meditated composition had appeared four years earlier (1838) under the title of *Zicci* in the *Monthly Chronicle*. The anxious labour of years expended on the 1842 novel had a reward of life-long gratification for its author. *Zanoni* was the first of his books which received from associated admirers throughout Europe the same kind of complimentary notice as afterwards fell to the lot of Browning among poets, and among novelists of George Meredith. In every European capital, from the Thames to the Neva, critical coteries and literary clubs busied themselves with discussing the inner meaning of the book; was it an allegory pure and simple, or was it only a narrative in which typical meanings were concealed? In jargon of this sort the discussion went on for weeks and months together. The great *Zanoni* mystery with its possible key supplied the book with an advertisement scarcely less useful than *Pelham* had received from its social satire, or *Paul Clifford* from its political personalities. Those who may now wish to solve the problem will find such material as is forthcoming for their help in Bulwer's introduction and notes. Like Byron in his poetry, Bulwer and Disraeli had already shown themselves in their novels the literary children of the French Revolution. Into *Zanoni* was condensed much fresh information about

the men and incidents connected with the overthrow of the old régime. These till then unpublished details came first from the private papers of Bulwer's grandfather, Warburton Lytton, second from eye-witnesses met by Bulwer at Mrs. Cunningham's during his Paris sojourn. Where *Zanoni* records actualities Bulwer entered into competition and provokes comparison with the two other great Englishmen of his age whose pens confessed the powerful attraction of the same theme. First wrote Carlyle; his *French Revolution* appeared in 1837. Dickens published the *Tale of Two Cities* in 1859. Bulwer, therefore, writing in 1842, might have seen but had certainly not studied the Scotch writer's work, to which he owed as few suggestions as to the English novelist's romance, which had still to come into existence. The preparation for *Zanoni* had partly begun in the study of French politics whose results appeared in the form of *Quarterly Review* articles. It is much to be regretted that Bulwer should not have been encouraged by his successful treatment in *Zanoni* of the overthrow of the old régime to write a book in which French affairs should have been, not a casual episode, but the central and sustained theme. His contributions to various periodicals, and his handling of French affairs many years later in the *Parisians*, show him to have possessed more qualifications for such a task than were forthcoming in any English author of the time. The present writer, though then still in early youth, recalls a conversation at Knebworth between Lord Lytton and one or two of his best-informed contemporaries,—among them the late Sir W. A. Fraser. "Why," asked Fraser, "did Napoleon divorce Josephine?" To which came the pithy answer: "Policy and revenge; people forget Josephine's conduct while Napoleon was in Egypt." Then followed a vivid and varied monologue about the unwritten story of incidents and individuals belonging to the revolutionary period,

condensing into short sentences the essence of forgotten or little-known biographies and memoirs that it had taken him years to read. Twelve months later, in 1843, the basis of Bulwer's fame enlarged itself by an English historical novel for whose writing he had begun twenty years earlier to prepare himself in his undergraduate rooms at Cambridge. This was the *Last of the Barons*. That work and *Harold*, appearing almost simultaneously with it, will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

THE NOVELIST OF NATION AND EMPIRE

The historical fictions of Scott and Bulwer compared—Bulwer's conception of the office of the historical novel—Theory exemplified in the *Last of the Barons—Harold*—Its charm and popularity—The novelist's historical accuracy—A publisher's enthusiasm for the *New Timon*—Lines on Derby and Russell—The first of the "domestic (?) fictions"—Public opinion of *Lucretia*—The author's protest—Dispute between Lytton and Tennyson—The supernatural in *King Arthur*—Its author's appreciation of the domestic happiness personally denied him—Arthur's vision of his successors to the island throne—*Caxtons*, the novel of empire—Its recollections of Lytton's boyhood—And allegorical significance—Other works of the same school—Sir Edward's theory of true colonization—Fruits of his labour—Growth of the imperial spirit—Commencement of the Blackwood connection—The critics on the *Caxtons*—The *Caxton* sales.

TO Sir Walter Scott as his literary master Bulwer had intended dedicating the first of his own historical romances which he might judge worthy of association with so great a name. Of those stories the earliest to be finished was *Devereux*. This, as has been seen, was written against time. On critically surveying the finished work the author found in it so many defects that he determined to wait till he could offer a tribute less below himself at his best. Time, however, ran on and, in his own words, Bulwer wearied of waiting for the ford which the tides refused.* Meanwhile, *Eugene Aram* had been completed; in the last year of his life the Laird of Abbotsford, opening a presentation copy, read the preface inscribing it to himself. Some remarks on *Devereux* in an earlier chapter contained a reference to differences between the historical novel in the hands of Scott and Bulwer. Before mentioning other dissimilarities, it is to be noticed that the year 1843,

* Dedicatory preface of *Eugene Aram*.

for more reasons than one, marks a new stage in Bulwer's literary and personal development. Not only was that the period which produced his most serious efforts at fiction founded upon national events, but the choice of subjects in *Harold* and the *Last of the Barons* showed a new disposition to profit from criticism, however hostile and even unjust. The satire of Thackeray and of other contributors to *Fraser's Magazine* had the good effect of urging Bulwer into a wider and healthier field than was offered by the romances of burglary and homicide. At the time he wrote *Devereux* he had mislaid his commonplace books containing the notes of his laborious reading for the Norman, the Saxon, the Plantagenet, and Baronial periods. But for that accident either or both of the 1843 romances might have appeared a full decade earlier than was actually the case. The *Devereux* who gave his name to the novel of 1829 resembled Scott's heroes in being the creature of the author's imagination. In the two fictions of 1843 Bulwer, as was generally done by two other historical romancists of his time, Harrison Ainsworth and G. P. R. James, disregarding the Scott precedent, gathered his interest and incidents round some among the authentic actors in the national events to whose period his stories belonged,—*Harold* as personifying the Saxon period, and *Warwick* for a type of the great nobles, the rivals of the king himself. One object with which Bulwer had so laboriously searched the black-letter and other books bearing on the times he described had been to illustrate and establish an idea running through the two fictions now mentioned,—the continuity of the nation's life and work in arts, letters, and politics amid the most disturbing and destructive conditions of the times. The shorter writings of his most Radical days show Bulwer's firm belief in the conservative forces common to human nature generally, but pre-eminently characterizing the life and genius of the English people. The nation's collective

life seems menaced with suspense ; the actual calamity of one day threatens to be surpassed by the impending ruin of the next. Yet to peaceable and law-abiding citizens the practical interference with the normal routine and duties of daily life is surprisingly small. Only after it is all over do they know from a few gradually visible changes that they have been living through a revolution. This at least is one of the chief impressions artistically conveyed by Bulwer's picture of the incidents and scenes that precede or accompany the transfer of the English Crown from Saxon to Norman, and the substitution of a Yorkist for a Lancastrian dynasty. Above all things Bulwer had at least formed a definite notion of the historical novel's true function and of the services which may be rendered by fiction in the elucidation of fact. Romance, he held, may, at obscure points of national story, discharge a duty not unlike that performed by hypothesis in physical research. Repeatedly, he says, in reading their works we find ourselves left in the dark by the historians. In these cases our curiosity reaches its height only to find that the chroniclers cannot satisfy it. Here the novelist may step in for our relief. Versed in human nature and trained to the conjecture of human motives, the novelist's imagination gropes among the ancient records, seeks to detect and guess the truth. Accustomed to deal with the heart, it seizes upon the paramount importance of some fact placed by the historian among dubious occurrences. Apply this method to a period so wanting authentic or consistent records as that of the wars between the two Roses. The fourth Edward's policy of depressing the old nobility was naturally disapproved by Richard Nevill. The most ancient annalists, however, agree that Warwick's quarrel with his sovereign originated in some incident more personal and embittering than this. Bulwer speaks in his preface of employing the analogical hypothesis. In the *Last of the*

Barons he shows the true Baconian spirit by only employing suppositions which, if he cannot in every case verify, are beyond denial reasonable. His account of the King-maker's rupture with Edward is in minute agreement with all that history records about the characters of both ; it is also true to the general conditions of the time. The effect of Warwick's commanding figure, dominating as it does the whole story, might have been heightened by contrast with some less heroic personality. Such a contrast, actually brought out between two other characters, maintains the interest in an episode which would otherwise prove intolerably tedious. The intercourse between human beings and the supernatural agencies, that unseen surround them, firmly possessed the popular mind in fifteenth-century England. The reader's concern for Adam Warner and even his daughter Sibyl is chiefly or entirely sustained by the rivalry between the good man Warner and his evil genius Bungay. Of less literary merit probably than the *Last of the Barons*, the *Last of the Saxon Kings* has appealed more strongly to a wider circle of readers. More than a quarter of a century after the former's appearance, its author, then Lord Lytton, heard from Napoleon III that it was the book read by him the night before surrendering himself to Prussia and lay on his bedside table for some days following the catastrophe of Sedan. To linger over the plan and subject of a work for years, perhaps before the book has advanced a sentence, is described in the preface to *Harold* as its author's habitual practice. He had no doubt done the same in the case of Edward IV and Warwick. It may be questioned, however, whether he had with equal thoroughness and satisfaction to his own mind assimilated the material on which he worked. Moreover, the Wars of the Roses are not perhaps a good subject for a genuinely national romance ; the King-maker himself not excepted, they produced no personage universally recognized as in-

carinating, like Schiller's Wallenstein, the highest heroism of the age. To compare the two novels of 1843, Bulwer may not have done with them all he might ; but the *Last of the Saxon Kings* offered him a period and personages more inspiring than the *Last of the Barons*. An epoch full of fierce wars culminating in the Conquest with its influence on England's destinies formed the background of *Harold* ; against that there is thrown out into strong relief the Saxon prince, amiable and vacillating, by the side of the shrewd and wary William. To the group of characters there are imparted a real grace and beauty in the finely drawn Edith, who makes herself felt as a living embodiment of whatever was true, tender, loyal, and picturesque in Saxon womanhood. Throughout the whole narrative there runs as a golden thread the course of Harold's and Edith's love. Sweyn's trial before the Witenagemot has been charged with technical defects. The picture of the Witan's meeting beneath the great roof of William Rufus has been commended for its accuracy by no less a critic than the late Bishop Stubbs. Nor have later discoveries of our national condition in the eleventh century detected anachronisms in the descriptions of everyday London, with the merchants standing by their booths that line the Strand and the host of burghers and matrons gaping open-mouthed half a dozen deep as they watch for the king riding on his way to royal Westminster.

In 1846 Bulwer had completed exactly half his literary course. It had opened obscurely with the rhymed Byronic story, *Ismael* ; speaking of this many years later its author could truthfully say, " Such reviewers as noticed my early verses at all were unanimous in declaring them detestable." Some, however, of the shorter and less ambitious attempts in metre, made during his youth and forgotten before manhood, contained, as has been seen in an earlier chapter, promise of better things. The expectation began

to fulfil itself during the eleven years break (1841-52) in his parliamentary course. With those we are now concerned.

The favourable reception given to the dramatic effort in the style of Sheridan, *Money*, 1840, encouraged Bulwer six years later to try the effect on the public of a metrical effort in the style of another great eighteenth-century master. The heroic couplets, however, of the *New Timon* are marked at their best by a nervous strength recalling Dryden even more than Pope. The courageous discernment shown by Colburn, 1828, in issuing *Pelham* against the advice of his "readers" had taught Bulwer the value of that publisher's opinion. At first, indeed, Colburn felt some doubt regarding the *New Timon*. By this time his mother's death (1844) had converted Edward Lytton-Bulwer into Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton and endowed him with the Hertfordshire estates of his maternal ancestors. Colburn, in his anxiety to avoid a false step, had remarked, "You see, Sir Edward, in poetry more even than in prose, everything depends upon the execution rather than the idea." "That being so," rejoined Bulwer-Lytton, "come down to Knebworth and remain my guest till you have mastered the manuscript for yourself." The invitation was accepted; but the publisher found no need of long trespassing on the author's hospitality. On meeting his host at dinner on the second evening of his stay, Colburn said, "I must be back in London early to-morrow." "You don't see your way, then, to it?" interrogatively murmured the master of Knebworth. "On the contrary," rejoined Colburn, "my object in leaving you is to lose not a day in getting it out." "You cannot," continued Lytton, "have seen very much of it." "Quite enough," burst in Colburn, "to recognize in it a present hit and a future classic." The specimen guiding Colburn to this decision may be seen on page 31 of the "Knebworth" edition, first in the lines on

the fourteenth Earl of Derby, then in the references to Lord John Russell.

One after one the lords of time advance,—
 Here Stanley meets,—how Stanley scoins, the glance !
 The brilliant chief, irregularly great,
 Frank, haughty, rash,—the Rupert of Debate ;
 Nor gout, nor toil, his freshness can destroy,
 And Time still leaves all Eton in the boy ;—
 First in the class, and keenest in the ring,
 He saps like Gladstone, and he fights like Spring.

And, tired with conquest over Dan and Snob,
 Plants a slight bruiser on the nose of Bob ;
 Decorous Bob, too friendly to reprove,
 Suggests fresh fighting in the next remove,
 And prompts his chum, in hopes the vein to cool,
 To the prim benches of the Upper School :
 Yet who not listens, with delighted smile,
 To the pure Saxon of that silver style ;
 In the clear style a heart as clear is seen,
 Prompt to the rash, revolting from the mean.

The Russell passage, which finally determined Colburn, follows the Stanley verses and may be prefaced by a few explanatory words. On the 6th of May, 1834, the House of Commons witnessed some sharp passages in the debate on the Irish Tithe Bill. The Whig cabinet of the day, containing both Russell and Stanley, were divided on the subject ; Stanley had pledged the Government to maintain undiminished the Irish Church revenues, Russell had let out that to such a pledge he would be no party. Hence Stanley's murmured remark, " Johnny's upset the coach." Far from authentic probably in some of its details, the story goes that Sir James Graham jotted down Stanley's words, putting the paper on which he had written them into his pocket. That same evening Graham's valet, brushing his master's clothes, found the pencilled scrap and took it to the *Times* office.

Next cool, and all unconscious of reproach,
 Comes the calm " Johnny who upset the coach."

How form'd to lead, if not too proud to please,—
 His fame would fire you, but his manners freeze.
 Like or dislike, he does not care a jot ;
 He wants your vote, but your affection not ;
 Yet human hearts need sun, as well as oats,
 So cold a climate plays the deuce with votes.—
 And while his doctrines ripen day by day,
 His frost-nipp'd party pines itself away ;—

But see our statesman when the steam is on,
 And languid Johnny glows to glorious John !

In this quotation two lines have been purposely omitted :

From the starv'd wretch its own loved child we steal—
 And "free-trade" chirrups on the lap of Peel.

This was, of course, written before Sir Robert's conversion to Cobden's doctrine. Bulwer's early sympathy with Peel's hostility to monopolies has been already mentioned. The *New Timon* contains his first prediction that Peel would before long abandon protection altogether. Colburn was not the only person to make acquaintance with the *New Timon* in manuscript. Shortly after beginning it, Bulwer read aloud some extracts from it to his friend John Forster. That gentleman was good enough to acquaint me with the facts concerning the poem as they are set down now.

The novels of English provincial and home life were in process of committal to paper while the *New Timon* was being corrected in proof. Bulwer-Lytton himself regarded these stories as opening not with the *Caxtons*, in 1850, but four years earlier with *Lucretia*. The moral meaning of that romance never, he thought, received from the critics a due meed of intelligent recognition. To speak of it as a melodramatic romance of homicide was to misrepresent its object and scope. Its purpose indeed, identical with that of the *Caxtons*, was to trace the influence of home education, of early circumstance and example upon later character and conduct. The only difference admitted by

Bulwer between the two was that not of moral but of treatment. *Lucretia* dwells on the darker side of human nature and refers subsequent crime and misery to the vicious surroundings of a joyless and loveless childhood. Its atmosphere, therefore, is sombre and tragic throughout. In the *Caxtons*, on the other hand, the early circumstances and training are those of joyous purity and sunny innocence. Happily consonant with these private and personal conditions, the period chosen for the *Caxtons* is, therefore, that of the peaceful and prosperous years following England's successful conduct of the struggle against Napoleon, and marked by the magnificent growth of a colonial empire bringing prosperity with honour to all classes of her people. Not less appropriately *Lucretia* opens during those years of revolution in France which, apart from any political results, bred so many new forms of moral disease in the men and women whose sad lot it was to be born during that era. If, as was said at the time of their first appearance, to insist upon a moral likeness between *Lucretia* and the *Caxtons* was to trifle with the public, it must be allowed that Bulwer-Lytton never imposed upon his readers without having first deceived himself. In the present case, moreover, he eventually admitted the public to be right in welcoming the *Caxtons* as wholesome reading for English youths, and in placing *Lucretia*, as it first appeared, on the *index expurgatorius*. The 1853 edition of *Lucretia* was introduced by a preface in which the author says he had come to think that, as a mere question of art, the story might have been improved in itself, and would have been more generally taken for what he intended it to be, if the gloom of the catastrophe were diminished. That involved a more ample and consistent assertion of the trite but amiable law of poetical justice. Consequently, in later impressions of the novel, the "Children of Night" are made to give up the victim whose fate had revolted earlier

readers. The strict chronological order, hitherto preserved in this chapter as elsewhere throughout the book, may be interrupted for a moment to point out a detail in the contrast between the two works for which Bulwer-Lytton characteristically claimed a unity of ethical idea. The *Lucretia* of 1846, which thus came ten years after its author's separation from his wife, was thought by some critics of the period allegorically to convey its writer's pessimistic views on matrimony, drawn from his own experiences of that state. *Lucretia* in the novel procures the death of her husband to prevent, as she knows he intends to do, his murdering herself. That is the idea of marriage as a duel to the death between two. Its representation as a conspiracy of two against the world is given in the picture of wedded felicity which is disclosed by the opening chapters of the *Caxtons*. While according to the author the *Children of Night* was a kind of prologue to *A Family Picture* (*Caxtons*), the earlier novel was also described by Bulwer as a supplement to his comedy of *Money*. "The root of all evil," as Arch-ruler of civilization, ruining virtues in the spendthrift no less than engendering vices in the miser, had given Bulwer, six years earlier, the subject for the social drama that still holds the stage. His skill, however, he felt, was not equal to compressing into a form suitable for the theatre one tithe of his wise and useful thoughts about the haste to become rich. That impatience, he considered, more than anything else distinguished the crisis of society at which we have arrived. In their wild desire for the first place, men and women press forward with no thought of conquering obstacles, but with the hope rather of eluding them. The result is an habitual gambling with the solemn destinies of life. The ever-present thought is to set success upon the chance of a die. Thus there ensues a mad hastening from the wish conceived to the end accomplished. The rush begins with the primers of infancy,

with *Philosophies for the Million* and *Sciences made Easy*. Not only in the dealings of speculators, but in the speeches of statesmen, may be seen a very unwholesome and very general symptom of the time. The same thought has already been shown to animate the most effective parts of *Night and Morning*. Labour and patience, therefore, are the two notes that Bulwer would have his public hear throughout all the crimes and terrors of *Lucretia*. The book, he had persuaded himself, bore no kinship whatever to the criminal stories of his earlier days. It was an ethical homily which—such was the purity of its teaching—might, but for its narrative form, have been delivered from religious pulpit or social science platform. As if beforehand to secure *Lucretia* a place in a trilogy including *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*, its author's Cambridge friend, Cockburn, now steadily rising towards the Solicitor-Generalship, had drawn his attention to two interesting lawbreakers of the day; one of these was remarkable for brilliant accomplishments and lively temper; the other bore a family likeness to Eugene Aram in intellectual tastes and universal knowledge. The careers of both belonged to the same generation as that which first read *Lucretia*; their lineaments are reflected in two of the most morally instructive among *Lucretia's* personal studies. Their misdeeds and the instruments employed, down even to the poisoned ring of the novel, occurred in real life exactly after the way described in the fiction. Here, then, under the shadow of the Old Bailey, had been found for Bulwer just the instances wanted of his argument that tragedy never quits the world, but surrounds us everywhere and will, while our planet lasts, as it did in the age of Pelops and Borgia, stalk on our paths. Bulwer's remarks in *Caxtoniana* on the *Moral Effect of Writers* have already been examined. In that essay the cardinal contention is that a book written with the most exemplary of objects may incidentally crowd the reader's mind with

the most pernicious of images and thoughts. That is a description which, if partially applicable to *Lucretia*, is agreeably contradicted by the novel with which Bulwer brackets *Lucretia*, the *Caxtons*. Between the *Children of Night* and *A Family Picture*, however, there appeared another of Bulwer's longest and most ambitious poems, in 1848. That date having now been reached, the composition must be mentioned here. The blameless king, his queen Guinevere, and his knightly company of the round table had been, in the seventeenth century, set down for future treatment at the same time by poets differing so widely from each other as Dryden and Milton. Tennyson did not make the subject his own till eleven years after Bulwer-Lytton's *King Arthur* appeared. The difference in age of six years between the two men did not prevent their Cambridge days overlapping. Two intellectual youths with so many tastes in common could scarcely help saying something about the Arthurian cycle's opportunities for a modern singer. Dates alone conclusively disprove the possibility of any jealousy on the subject ever existing between the two. The oft-quoted couplet from the *New Timon* :

The jingling melody of purloined conceits,
Out-babying Wordsworth and out-glittering Keats,

irritated Tennyson a good deal more in the 'forties than would have been the case if he had first read it ten years later. Tennyson's metrical retort lacked the point and vigour of the original attack. Nor is it certain that the greatest of the nineteenth-century laureates seriously thought of seeing his rhymed rejoinder in print. He at least denied having ever sent to *Punch* the lines about "dandy pathos," etc. These are too familiar to quote at full length here. The laureate's reply was well known from repetition by many different lips before finding its way into print. The story of John Forster's having sent them to

Punch is merely guess-work. It has even been denied that they appeared in that paper at all. In 1848 four anonymous instalments conveyed to the public Bulwer's poem on the subject which Dryden and Milton had, as has been said, both meditated, but had passed away without touching. In 1849 a new two-volume edition of it was published by Colburn, and several reprints were subsequently issued from different houses. The stanza chosen by Bulwer differs from that of Spenser in containing not nine lines, but six. The reading for the poem and its distribution into parts had been begun by Bulwer at Cambridge, and continued till the work of composition commenced. The Bulwerian Arthur is something more than the hero of a national romance without being, like the Tennysonian Arthur, the idealized type of knightly nobleness, of all moral and spiritual graces. With Bulwer the royal impersonation of British resistance to Saxon conquest is not only mythical in his origin, but a fantastically supernatural figure, the subject of a supernatural ministry in all his developments. Guardian spirits, sometimes taking a visible form, hover above and around his enchanted person. Sprites, gnomes, fairies, and elves of all degrees are in seen or unseen attendance upon him at all times of trial or danger. Nature shows a portentous sympathy with Arthur in his sudden perils, snatches him when overpowered from his adversaries, much as the deities of the *Iliad* delivered their favourite heroes by the shelter of a surrounding mist. Again and again the enemy seems on the point of taking away the charmed life. Suddenly a cavern, unseen before, welcomes the king to its impregnable recesses; or a capacious pit, opening in the sold ground, invites the hero and his knightly comrades by a sharp but safe descent into its friendly gloom until the tyranny is overpast.

The touches of self-record in *King Arthur* are as nothing in comparison with those of which Byron had set the ex-

ample in *Childe Harold*. Occasionally, however, the autobiographical element is discernible here as in nearly everything else from Bulwer's pen. He had missed the happiness of home-life for himself. His sense of its beauty colours the domestic descriptions of his novels ; it abounds in his essays, and reflects itself in his poems, even in this national epic, witness Stanza LXXI of *King Arthur* :

Two loves, and both divine and pure, there are ;
 One by the roof-tree takes its root for ever,
 Nor tempests rend, nor changeful seasons mar—
 It clings the stronger for the storm's endeavour ;
 Beneath its shade the wayworn find their rest,
 And in its boughs the cushat builds her nest.

LXXII

But one more frail,—in that more prized, perchance,
 Bends its rich blossoms over lonely streams
 In the untrodden ways of wild romance,
 On earth's far confines, like the Tree of Dreams,
 Few find the path ;—linger, O ye that find !
 'Tis lost for ever when once left behind.

LXXIII

O, the short spring !—the eternal winter !—all
 Branch,—stem all shattered ; fragile as the bloom !
 Yet this the love that charms us to recall ;
 Life's golden holiday before the tomb ;
 Yea ! *this* the love that age again lives o'er
 And hears the heart beat loud with youth once more !*

In such lines may be seen once more the familiar reminiscence of the boyish love at Ealing. With occasional exceptions, however, like these, the poet seldom wanders far from the historic grandeur of his theme. In an earlier passage than that containing the verses just quoted, the king, surrounded by mitred priests and ermined barons, is gratified

* *King Arthur*, "Knebworth" edition, p. 112.

by the "loud praise which monarchs love to hear." But, he suddenly exclaims :

Courts are not states—let me see men ! Behind
Where stands the people—Genius, lift the blind.

XLII

Slow fades the pageant and the phantom stage
As slowly filled with squalid ghastly forms ;
Here over fireless hearths cowered shivering age
And blew with feeble breath dead embers ; storms
Hung in the icy welkin and the bare
Earth lay forlorn in winter's charnel air.

The picture is continued through several stanzas. None of them are without good and strong lines, whose effect is, however, impaired by signs too visible of the effort they cost their author. A little later there passes before Arthur a vision of those afterwards to fill the island throne. The line opens with the

. . . Sire of chivalry,
Ever by minstrel watched and knight adored,
King of the haloed-brow, and diamond sword.

This, of course, is Richard Cœur de Lion, Arthur's true descendant, not only in kingly power, but in knightly prowess. Among subsequent apparitions the most important is the father of the Tudors. Being Welsh, Henry Tudor was, like Arthur, Celtic. Poetically, therefore, he could be spoken of as restoring the English crown to its rightful possessors in the Celtic and Arthurian line. Far more important than this, the Tudor kings, whatever their faults, opened the dawn of a new era for the liberties of men. From the Welsh king there sprang not only the Tudors, but the Stuarts. These, of course, fill the foremost place in Bulwer's historical pageant. If, however, the Stuarts were conspicuous for the true British, which is also the Celtic, courage and gallantry, so, too, were their opponents. Hence the poet's conclusion that Royalist and Republican

were alike great and noble because each in an equal degree embodied the best ideals of an heroic age. Thus, on the one hand, Derby and Falkland; on the other, Hampden and Vane are each in their way worthy to be counted among King Arthur's posterity. Of this truth the noblest and by far the best executed illustration contained in the poem is that of Milton, for did not the poet unite all the romance of the Cavalier with all the zeal of the Republican? The long and august procession closes thus :

Mild, like all strength, sits crown'd Liberty,
Wearing the aspect of a youthful queen :
And far outstretched along the unmeasured sea
Rests the vast shadow of her throne ; serene
From the dumb icebergs to the fiery zone,
Rests the vast shadow of that guardian throne.

Bulwer's handling of the theme, meditated but untouched by some of the nation's greatest singers, may be appropriately closed with this tribute to the royal lady, whence is called that Victorian era with which is chiefly associated Bulwer's fame.

The Queen and Prince Consort had, first made his personal acquaintance on the occasion already described of *Not so bad as we seem* being performed at Devonshire House. *King Arthur* had been commanded at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle some time before it was in any request in the circulating libraries. Thus, ten years before kissing hands as a Cabinet Minister, Sir Edward Lytton had come into favour at Court. That good opinion he owed to his work not as a politician, but as a writer. So, too, was it a literary rather than a parliamentary or administrative reputation which, still more widely established by the *Caxtons* two years after *King Arthur's* appearance, seemed popularly to justify his appointment to the Colonial Secretaryship. The *Caxtons*, indeed, now about to be dealt with here, was as much a novel of Empire as of domestic life. The personal surroundings of Pisistratus Caxton in

his boyhood reflect various Bulwer and Lytton forms that were among its author's earliest recollections; *Amadis of Gaul*, the favourite book of Edward Bulwer's childhood, reappears here as Pisistratus Caxton's never-absent literary companion. At a later date his work as Trevanion's private secretary supplies materials for a sketch, historically accurate, of a Parliament man's day while the hours kept were still early, before club life had received its full developments, or the conveniences of the House itself had won for it the title of the "best club in London." In that early epoch members took what they had time to eat at Bellamy's, just as had been done by Pitt first and Canning afterwards. Then there are the social scenes at Trevanion's residence where Fanny breaks the secretary's heart by flirting with two peers, a life-guardsman, three old members of Parliament, a dandified and opulent baronet, Sir Sedley Beaudesert, one ambassador with all his attachés, a bishop in full wig and apron, who was credited with meaning to marry again. The character in the *Caxtons* which specially delighted the colonial public and the younger generation of English readers was that embodying colonial buoyancy, enterprise, and cheerfulness, Guy Bold-ing, whose constant "Oh, what fun!" recalled *Martin Chuzzlewit* Mark Tapley's "No credit in being jolly only under these circumstances." The second title of the *Caxtons* is *A Family Picture*. It is, however, something of an historic parable as well, and must, therefore, be considered in relation to other fictions of a like kind belonging to some part of the same period. Two years before the *Caxtons* appeared, Anthony Trollope had written his first novel (1847) the *Macdermots of Ballycloran*; this is a genuinely Irish story, mentioned now because in Feemy it contains an allegorical personification of Ireland herself. At the same time as Trollope's earliest fiction saw the light, Lever had begun to draw his Irish types of a different kind in *Harry*

Lorrequer. Forty-two years later Froude the historian's *Two Chiefs of Dunboy* showed that as little in commerce as in diplomacy and war (the two fields of Lever's demonstration) do Irishmen fail of success when once removed from their own country. Trollope's and Froude's Irish fictions just mentioned are, therefore, allegorical. Three years after Trollope's *Macdermots* appeared the not less allegorical *Caxtons*. Pisistratus Caxton retrieves at the Antipodes the family fortunes ruined by Uncle Jack's wild speculations and profitless company promoting for the extraction of sunbeams from cucumbers. Here is a type of England compensating herself for the American possessions squandered away by George III and his minister, Lord North, with the establishment of an Australasian dominion. Just a quarter of a century later Bulwer's friend Disraeli made a still more famous contribution to the school now mentioned of fiction with a public purpose. In *Lothair* Disraeli has impersonated the English people, beset, on the one hand, by the snares of the Red Republic and on the other, by the fascinations of the Papal Church. Without anticipating the proper course of this narrative, nothing can be said here of the services which, in the Conservative Cabinet of 1858, Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton rendered to our colonial system. At the present moment it may, however, in passing be recalled that the English people rose somewhat slowly to a right appreciation of the priceless treasure possessed by them in their settlements beyond the seas. There was indeed a time when even Disraeli could speak of "these wretched colonies as a mill-stone round our necks, sure to set up against us directly they got the chance." * The true cult of the colonies at home was founded by Bulwer-Lytton in the *Caxtons* eight years before, in the Derby Cabinet, he began to educate his colleague Disraeli into considering the upholding of England's empire to be

* In a letter to the Foreign Minister, Malmesbury, 1852.

the great object of Conservative policy. The secret or Bulwer's interest in the colonies was, as in the case of his countrymen generally, that our settlements beyond the seas had been created by individual enterprise and that their inhabitants had won their way to different forms of self-rule by the same slow degrees as those by which local and national liberties had been granted to the subjects of the crown at home. In the novel, Pisistratus Caxton complains to his friend and employer, Trevanion, about the necessity placed on him, should he remain in his native land, of still further draining his father's reduced resources. "It is," Trevanion replies, "a painfully common case. This old world contains many young men like you, able, intelligent, active, but confronted by obstacles in the pursuit of our conventional professions." The old Greeks seemed to Trevanion to have been beset by and to have solved the same problem; they sent out, not only the refuse of an over-populated state, but a large proportion of the better class—fellows full of pith, sap, and exuberant vitality like yourself, blending in their settlements the aristocratic with the more democratic element. They did not, that is, turn a rabble loose upon the new soil. They planted in the foreign allotments all the rudiments of an harmonious state analogous to that in the mother country. They did not only get rid of hungry, craving mouths; they furnished a vent for a waste surplus of intelligence and courage, really not needed at home, and more often coming to ill than good. That, however, which here only menaces our artificial embankments, there, carried off in an aqueduct, might give life to a desert. As, continued Trevanion, the principal town in a colony rises into the dignity of a capital, I sometimes think it might be wise to go still farther, not only to transplant to it a high standard of civilization, but to draw it more closely into connection with the parent state. The passage to and fro of spare

intellect, education, breeding, and social accomplishment might, I often think, be promoted by drafting off thither the spare scions of royalty itself; when arrived at a state that would bear this importation, the colony would thrive all the better for it. Sooner or later the day will come in which the settlement has grown into an independent state. We may then prove to have laid the seeds of a constitution and a civilization similar to our own, with self-developed forms of monarchy and aristocracy, though of simpler growth than old societies accept; for depend on it, adds Trevanion, the new world will be friendly or hostile to the old, not in proportion to the kinship of race, but in proportion to the similarity of manners and institutions.* Gibbon Wakefield, often called the author of our colonial system, was acting as Lord Durham's private secretary in Canada while Bulwer was denouncing to the House of Commons the Whig policy of Irish and Canadian coercion. The ideas put forth in the *Caxtons* some time before the views of Lord Durham's ex-secretary were known to the novelist, are in undesigned agreement with Wakefield's cardinal contentions. Writing on the eve of the Victorian era, the author of the *Caxtons* interpreted the spirit of his age when he said, "Everything seems to cry aloud to every man, 'Do something, do it! do it!'" Part of the preparation for the *Caxtons* had been the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the resources possessed by the different colonies, and of the peculiar opportunities offered by each to emigrants. It was, therefore, as a well-informed and responsible adviser that in this novel Bulwer-Lytton described Australia as the land for the man who with plenty of wits combines a small capital, and who is contented to spend ten years in trebling it. Take out three thousand pounds; before you are thirty you may return with twelve thousand and become

* The *Caxtons*, "Knebworth" edition, pp. 323-7.

a cabinet minister at home. To something like this effect said Disraeli many years later in the House of Commons : " A man goes to Australia, finds a nugget or shears a thousand flocks, is Member for Melbourne to-day, takes the steamer home and is Member for London to-morrow." Bulwer-Lytton's social philosophy was conveyed for the most part through the medium of prose ; that of his accomplished son, at different times European ambassador and Indian Viceroy, the first Earl Lytton, is to be gathered from his poems and especially his *Fables in Song*. These contain at least one passage melodiously echoing and illustrating some of the most characteristic sentiments in which his father's novels abound.

Be thine these songs of far and near,
Two worlds their sources are :
Each makes the other doubly dear,
The near one and the far.*

In this graceful composition " The near " includes all that is best in the idea of home ; its tenderest associations, its most consecrated and tranquil joys. " The far " signifies the great world beyond, in which fame is won, and services are rendered to generations yet unborn. It is the lofty longing after an unattainable ideal which ennobles life and purifies thought. Let no one underrate the blessing which attends the acquisition and the exercise of the home virtues. At the same time the starting-point must not be mistaken for the goal. The relations of domestic life must be looked upon as a school in which we learn, and from which we rise to the higher and broader responsibilities of citizenship in a state not confined within the walls of the four seas. Another purpose was present to Bulwer-Lytton when he gave to his best story of English home life those features which make it also a novel of Empire ;—" I wished," he told his colleague at the Colonial Office, the fourth Earl of

* *The Blue Mountains or The Far.*

Carnarvon, "to suggest that, whether in an English country house or in an Australian sheep farm, the Englishman is equally at home, and that the intervening oceans may separate, but need not disunite."

In the essay on *Style and Diction* (IX),* Sterne is praised for his subtle and fine perception of the various capacities of our language. With what light and strong fingers he flies over the keys of the instrument. To vary the metaphor, he could play with the massive weights of our language as a juggler plays with his airy balls. The frolicsome and zoneless graces, as Bulwer calls them, of Sterne are lavishly reproduced in what serves as a prologue to the *Caxtons*. With these qualities are blended touches in the manner of Fielding,—the result being that the book on its earliest anonymous appearance excited many guesses as to its authorship. At that time Robert Southey's *Commonplace Book* and *The Doctor* were still read, though their author had died some years earlier, in 1843. The *Caxtons*, one critic confidently declared, must be a posthumous work of Southey's,—if only because of the domino box incident in Chapter IV; Southey, it was asserted, alone could combine the domestic pathos and moral elevation shown in every detail of this episode.

For the author himself not the least important circumstance connected with this story was that it began the memorable connection with the publishing house of Blackwood, which grew closer and more valuable year by year till the close of his life. The manuscript of the *Caxtons* had in the late autumn of 1843 advanced far enough to suggest arrangements for its publication. With that view Bulwer had opened negotiations with the famous Edinburgh firm, without at first any thought of running the novel through a monthly periodical. With an air of much mystery, all he let John Blackwood know was that he had

* *Caxtoniana*, p. 81.

a. novel almost ready for the press which he thought would prove the most popular subject he had ever tried. His only fear was that his terms for a tale might seem too high. He wanted at least twelve hundred or a thousand pounds. "Provided," was Blackwood's prompt answer, "the work proves suitable there will be, I think, no difficulty about the figure." The business details were settled at once. It was not, however, till some years afterwards that the publication of the *Caxtons* in Blackwood's magazine actually began. Bulwer-Lytton's association with the Blackwoods coincided with the opening of the most important period of his work as a novelist. The *Caxtons*, indeed (1850), marked an entirely fresh start in his course, as the reviewers were not slow to point out. "A higher tone of mind and thought than it seemed possible the author of *Pelham* could possess" was the criticism on the introductory instalment of the story. The initial chapters displayed a group consisting of the philosopher, soldier, and buffoon. This was at once on all sides recognized as in the happiest vein of *Tristram Shandy*. After all, agreed the Edinburgh pundits, Francis Jeffrey and Macvey Napier, this is no common man, who, after having dissipated his brains over flummery and tinsel like *Pelham* the dandy, and *Zanoni* the charlatan, can not only describe but group the natural and healthy characters of everyday English life. Macaulay, more than ten years earlier, had read Bulwer's *Alice* as he passed through the Pontine Marshes; it affected him more than any other novel he had come across these many years; its great fault, as he thought, was bad taste arising from a cause which lies deep and is not to be removed, want of soundness, manliness, and simplicity of mind. The same critic had no fault to find on this score with the *Caxtons*. "He did, however," says Bulwer, "point out one or two rather important oversights of mine." Published separately in book form, the *Caxtons* at first did less well

than might have been expected from its reception in the magazine. *Harold* had sold between two and three thousand copies very shortly after it came out. Nothing like this was done by the *Caxtons*, and yet, to quote his own words, the *Caxtons* struck Bulwer as infinitely more adaptable to popularity than *Harold*. These, it must be remembered, were the days of the three-volume novel; *à propos* of this, with his characteristic and prescient sagacity, Bulwer was reaching the conclusion that the three-volume form was wearing out. The popular fiction of the near future, he added, will be of an entirely new kind and quite a new shape. The *Caxton* sales may not have equalled the author's hopes; they did not disappoint the publisher. Otherwise John Blackwood, perhaps the shrewdest literary man of business then living, would not, in 1849, have so delightedly welcomed Bulwer's proposal to write another tale. This proved to be *My Novel*. Before that work's completion, Bulwer's course had been marked by events that will be treated in a new chapter.

CHAPTER XII

A POLITICAL CONVERSION AND ITS SEQUEL

Foreign travel—Studies in Germany for writing on Schiller—Meeting with Benjamin Jowett—Conversation on German universities—Still protectionist—The *John Bull* letters, representing Corn Laws or no Corn Laws as a matter of administrative detail rather than of party principle—English prosperity under free trade—Public interest in Lytton's return to Parliament—Toning down in 1852 of some peculiarities in delivery and personal appearance—Speeches on the Disraeli and Gladstone budgets—The literary romancist in parliamentary harness—Attack on Lord John Russell at the Vienna Conference (1855)—The affair of the *Iorcha Arrow*—Lytton on Palmerston, Mamma England's "spoiled son"—His high spirit and "smash goes the crockery"—Palmerston's India Bill, 1858—Lytton's last great speech as a private member marred by oratorical defects still to be overcome—The member for Hertfordshire becomes Secretary of State for the Colonies—Influence of the *Caxtons* on his appointment—Lady Lytton's war against Sir Edward—A characteristic anecdote—Husband and wife on the election hustings—The *Caxtons* series continued—Purpose and plot of *My Novel*—Personal touches in *What Will He Do With It?*—The author's acknowledgment of his indebtedness to John Blackwood—Connection with Routledge—High prices for cheap editions.

FOR eleven years (1841-52) Bulwer-Lytton was absent from the House of Commons. He took, therefore, no part in the Corn Law debates of 1846, or in the discussions a little later on Ireland, on Factory Legislation, on the admission of Jews to Parliament when that subject first engaged attention, on Chartism, on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, on the repeal of the Navigation Laws, or on the Don Pacifico incident, in which his Cambridge friend, Alexander Cockburn, fulfilled the highest promise of his undergraduate oratory. Throughout these eventful and exciting years the ex-member for St. Ives and Lincoln was re-establishing his health by change of scene and occupation abroad, and was replenishing as well as refreshing his mind by the study of the German language

and literature in Germany itself. The literary results of these occupations showed themselves first in the translations from Schiller and other poets of the fatherland that in *Blackwood's Magazine* preceded the appearance of the *Caxtons*. These renderings, varied by versions of Horace, were at intervals continued by him in the same periodical almost till the pen dropped from his hand. During his long furlough Bulwer-Lytton first chanced to meet Benjamin Jowett, the future Master of Balliol, who in 1844 visited Germany for the purpose of studying the history of Greek philosophy. "Shy and gloomy for the most part, but occasionally ingenious and entertaining," was the impression left by the novelist on the professor. In a greater degree than Jowett himself, Bulwer-Lytton brought back to England a life-long amazement at German universality as exemplified in Schiller, whose mastery of science, politics, history, art, surpassing any knowledge of the kind possessed by English writers, always remained a favourite theme of his Knebworth table-talk. What a pity, Bulwer-Lytton had remarked during one of their conversations abroad, that the English Universities cannot, like the German, operate as great permanent reservoirs, not merely of academic culture, but of the nation's entire mental life, by imparting to the student body those productive intellectual impulses which fertilize the whole field of later existence, whatever may be the special object of its subsequent cultivation. With a comic expression of horror playing over his cherubic features, Jowett chirped out, "My dear sir, be careful. Don't you know that Doctor Pusey has stated, as a matter of fact too notorious to require proof, that the net result of the German University system is not only compulsory atheism, but profligacy and depravity exceeding anything known even by name on the Isis or the Cam?" "I wonder," rejoined his companion, "whether Doctor Pusey knows that the first oath taken by the German student

bodies among themselves, and to a great extent kept, ~~is~~ one of chastity." The earlier essays and translations, whether classical or modern, were followed, between 1850 and 1869, by accounts more elaborate of the poet who wrote *The Bell* and *The Robbers*, and by carefully revised volumes of Horatian renderings, bearing on their title page the name of both Blackwood and Longmans. Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* had indeed come out in 1825, the best part of a generation earlier than Bulwer-Lytton's; but the older writer fully admitted the younger's claim to share with him the credit of first securing the great German masters a recognized place among the instruments of English culture.

Six years after Peel's conversion by Cobden to free trade the dissolution of 1852 enabled the constituencies to reconsider their alleged decision against the protection which Peel had abandoned, but which Derby and Disraeli were now, it was supposed, willing to restore. In such a restoration Disraeli, it is now known, did not himself believe. As things are, he had recently said, we must show ourselves complete free traders, thereby letting the English farmer, and the English landlord, too, buy the best and cheapest silks for their wives and daughters. On the other hand, the new Conservative member for Hertfordshire had recently maintained in print that to change back from free trade to protection would be as much in accordance with English precedent as it had been to replace protection by free trade. Dissent from Cobdenism had cost Bulwer-Lytton his seat for Lincoln in 1841. Twelve months before re-entering Parliament as an anti-Peelite, in 1852, in one of his *Letters to John Bull, Esq.*, he had foreshadowed his definite separation from the apostate Tories, the Whigs and Liberals unnaturally banded together in the recent attack upon the Corn Laws. The pamphlet just mentioned* told John Bull

* *Pamphlets and Speeches*. "Knebworth" edition, p. 76.

that his most serious trouble came from allowing his town servants to regulate his country affairs. Writing in 1851 with the assured prospect of an agricultural county seat, the pamphleteer begs the rural constituencies not to forget how Peel and Lord John Russell are equally ready to sacrifice them to urban interests. Worse than that, the emigrants now pouring into Australia and America were carrying with them bitterness against the free trade statesmen who had caused their expatriation. The wanton assault upon the owners and cultivators of the soil left the legislature no time for discharging its most elementary duties to the people. England wanted popular education, Ireland needed prosperity and peace. Free trade blocked the way. It was, indeed, said that we might as well repeal the Reform Bill as re-enact the Corn Laws. History, John Bull is told, shows that at all times and in all countries Corn Laws have been constantly in process of making and unmaking. Through the dark ages the importation of foreign wheat was free. In 1461 the transfer of the sceptre to the House of York replaced the power of the old territorial nobles by the ascendancy of a trading and protectionist middle class under Edward IV, a merchant-king. In 1688, with the departing Stuart and the arriving Orange, came a cry for free trade in corn ; the change, as a trifle of administrative business, was made by a mere stroke of the pen. As for all sensible men being in 1852 dead against protection ; why, through most of the 'forties these same sensible men had declared free trade to be a form of lunacy. Corn legislation, therefore, must always be an open question. To say that a man who is against free trade is against freedom itself is to talk nonsense. The United States is very democratic in politics, but ultra-protectionist in commerce. France, amid all her revolutions, ever remains protectionist. Even the free traders themselves differ as to the effects of Corn Law repeal on wages. It must lower

wages, says Mr. Villiers. It must raise them, says Colonel Torrens. What is the verdict of commercial history on the subject? Of all the old Greek states, Athens prospered most in trade. Athens, too, largely depended upon its foreign corn supply. Necessarily she developed free-trade tendencies. These did not prevent her from imposing whatever commercial restriction seemed likely to benefit herself and to injure her rivals in Boeotia and Megara. The commercial prosperity of Venice, of Genoa, and other mediæval Italian republics was based on protection. Much has been said about the free trade of Holland. As a fact that country, in regard to her most vital industries, for instance, her fisheries, was jealously restrictive. Gradually the Dutch relaxed their system. Soon they ceased to be the carriers of Europe, and their old prosperity had gone never to return. In eighteenth-century England herself, nothing but the defence of protective tariffs had saved the silk trade from destruction by foreign rivalry. Apart from the historical knowledge displayed in their illustrations, the chief interest found by the reader to-day in these protectionist pleadings of two generations since consists in their resemblance at a single point to some former remarks made by the twentieth-century leader of the opposition. Early in the Tariff Reform controversy of our day, Mr. Balfour protested against a mere question of fiscal arrangement being considered a principle of policy to divide cabinets, and to deprive the country of the services it might still receive from its most eminent public men. That was exactly in the spirit of Bulwer-Lytton's cardinal contentions. Free trade or protection was a matter not to upset ministries or overthrow statesmen, but for Treasuries to settle. In 1834 Bulwer's *Letter to a late Cabinet Minister on the present Crisis* had been one of those party services and literary hits which helped to secure him his baronetcy from Melbourne. The *John Bull* letters

of 1851 were ill-judged and not very powerfully executed attempts to repeat the pamphleteering success of seventeen years before. After the close of the 'forties, free trade had advanced beyond the argumentative stage. The conclusive answers to the reasonings and the forecasts of Bentinck, Derby, of Disraeli himself had been given not by Cobden, but, as Disraeli himself perceived, by facts. Bulwer-Lytton was yet to show himself a statesman as well as an orator, and instances have already been given of a certain prescience he had always possessed. If these gifts had not demonstrated to him the hopelessness of the task undertaken in the *John Bull* letters, he should have found a warning in the facts and figures already before the world. During the five years which had elapsed since the Corn Laws ceased to exist, taxation to the amount of six millions had been dropped; yet the revenue had not received a penny's hurt. British exports had increased from £58,000,000 to £78,000,000. The shipping trade, it was said, must be ruined by the repeal of the Navigation Laws, which, in 1849, had shared the fate of protection. As a fact it had never been more prosperous. Foreign competition, if Bulwer-Lytton's doctrines were sound, must crush the poor. These were the very classes that in 1852 found themselves better off than they had ever been before. On New Year's Day, 1853, there were less than 800,000 paupers in England and Wales. Even the landowners, for whose sake the battle of protection had been fought, had benefited by cheap corn. The assessment based on the rental of agricultural land in 1845 had amounted to £46,328,811; in 1852 the figures were £46,681,488.*

Thus when the Hertfordshire electors sent back Bulwer-Lytton to the House of Commons, in 1852, there was already ground enough for Disraeli's often-quoted words about

* These statistics are condensed from Sir Spencer Walpole's *History of England*, Vol. V, pp. 458-9.

protection being not only dead but damned. The free trade majority in Parliament—315—exceeded only by sixteen the strength of the Conservative opposition. The balance between the two parties, apt in more modern times to be held by the Irish members, then rested with the Peelites, two score strong. Since his departure from Westminster, in 1841, Bulwer-Lytton's reputation had been much extended by his writings. His return, therefore, excited keen interest and speculation on both sides of the House. Would absence prove him to have forgotten the parliamentary cunning he had previously acquired, to have endowed him with new qualifications or to have confirmed him in old faults? During his earlier parliamentary days he had, as has been seen already, achieved some notable successes; these, however, were disfigured by not a few personal defects. His eloquence often touched a high point,—yet too frequently without producing its really deserved effect. The chief cause of this failure was an inability to conceal the art which often thus became either indistinguishable from artifice, or betrayed the speaker into mannerisms which included a drawl punctuated by frequent murmurs of the dissyllable *erra*, and which his hearers were disposed as an affectation to resent. For the give and take, the quick thrust and parry of debate, his fitness had still to be shown. Above all, he had still to study and learn how to humour the whims and prejudices of the House. He had mastered its orders without so far entering into its spirit. Next he had to free himself from the reproach of speaking at it rather than talking to it. The force of these considerations could have been understood by no one better than by Bulwer himself. The Commons had taken possession of Barry's new building in the August of 1851. Bulwer-Lytton at once began to frequent the new smoking-room; it is, he said, to Parliament what the green room is to a theatre. For the time he naturally sat

on the ministerial side. Where would he, it was wondered, permanently find a place? for had he not expressly warned alike friends and foes not to interpret association with the protectionists as implying any surrender of his popular sympathies? His political table-talk at this time might be described as a constantly reiterated protest against the notion that the free traders had any claim to the monopoly of democratic reform. He had left the House (1841) a young man of thirty-eight, clad in the height of fashion, conspicuous for the unshorn and dishevelled luxuriance of hair on head and face, traditionally proper to literary and artistic genius. He returned to it at the mature age of forty-nine, not indeed prematurely aged, but with a face whose sharpened features and whose deep lines told of incessant care and habitual worry. For the rest the locks, formerly unshorn and unrestrained, were reduced to order; while the costume was that of a country gentleman not less careful of his attire than of his estate. In the April of 1852 he had taken his seat near the men of metal and acres to whose number, as master of Knebworth, he now belonged, and who included historic Tories like Lord John Manners, Spencer Walpole, afterwards Home Secretary, John Warner Henley, and Sir John Pakington. He at once began to make good what was wanting in his earlier parliamentary education, and before speaking to familiarize himself with the changed tastes and conditions of the assembly. His personal intercourse was not restricted to the party leaders whom he had known before; he personally acquainted himself with the party rank and file in the lobbies as well as in the House, at the Carlton and in Pall Mall not less than at Westminster. After more than half a year's silence there came the opportunity for speech, at a crisis in the fate not only of the Government he supported, but of the finance minister who was his personal friend. Bulwer-Lytton's position in the free trade controversy was at this

moment much better than that of Disraeli, who, having risen to the Conservative leadership on Peel's overthrow, was now ready to dupe his protectionist supporters by the adoption of the apostate Peel's principles. He still contended that the taxpayer suffered from losses inflicted by free trade, but throughout 1852 showed his readiness to surrender in office the beliefs he had avowed in opposition. His budget, in the December of 1852, was based upon free trade, but made a show of relieving the British farmers who grew corn and the British colonists who traded in sugar. Bulwer-Lytton, on the other hand, had, since it was first threatened in 1841, never wavered in his loyalty to protection. In the speech with which he supported Disraeli's 1852 budget, he differed from Disraeli in attributing the increase of national prosperity not to free trade but, by a learned and ingenious if not convincing argument, to the new gold discoveries in America and Australia, and to their effect upon British prices. Disraeli warmly thanked Lytton for his speech, but notwithstanding found himself in the minority (305 to 286) that caused the Derby-Disraeli Cabinet to make way for the Coalition Government under Aberdeen. Gladstone, who in the previous year by his exposure of the new taxation projects had established his financial fame, succeeded Disraeli at the Exchequer. In the April of 1853 Gladstone's earliest budget speech, with a succession duty for its main feature, invited Bulwer-Lytton to an attack on Peelite finance, as expounded by Peel's successor. The first blot in the 1853 budget hit by Bulwer-Lytton was one of principle. Mr. Gladstone's assumption of a steadily increasing revenue rested, as the member for Hertfordshire pointed out, on the supposition that the era of universal peace, introduced it was hoped by the Great Exhibition of 1851, would indefinitely continue. Does not, asked Lytton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer perceive that the order which emanates from civilization

in itself must make for war ? The more civilized Europe becomes, the greater the population of its states and the necessity placed on its peoples of enlarging their means of support at the expense of their weaker neighbours. We have, continued Lytton, already a colonial empire that is the envy and the admiration of the whole world. These priceless possessions are not, however, calculated to conciliate our rivals, must from time to time expose us to threats and dangers and fasten on us the responsibility of maintaining, if it is to be efficient, the costliest navy which we can imagine. Lytton next addressed himself to a detail, the new succession duty. This, he said, is expected to produce more than £5,000,000 before 1857 ; I am told that this estimate is much too low. My own opinion, after the most careful examination from every point of view, is that it will be found far too high. This anticipation was fulfilled to the letter. Within two years the new succession duties had not realized even one-fourth of the sum on which their author had been told by the Treasury experts he might rely. If Lytton's financial criticism had been delivered with more animation of manner and modulated vigour of voice, he would, in theatrical phrase, have brought the House down on all sides. Even his languid and rather melancholy elocution did not prevent the country gentlemen around him from being transported with surprised delight at the businesslike and unanswerable dissection of the Gladstonian scheme. They had expected something at least in the vein of *Ernest Maltravers*. As a fact, the novelist's financial criticisms, in the House, had all the simple terseness of his own model parliament man of business, Trevanion, in the *Caxtons*. They were noted with respectful earnestness by Gladstone, rivalled, as Disraeli put it, in unadorned sagacity Joseph Warner Henley himself, and might have pleased the spirits of downright "Shippen or of old Montaigne." A constitutional difficulty in hearing quickly had from the

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first disqualified him for off-hand rejoinders to an opponent's objections. That weakness was now admittedly to some extent compensated by the effective versatility of which he had given proof. The rest of the parliamentary year was taken up by discussions on foreign politics, on Jewish disabilities, and on the newspaper advertisement duty repeal. In most of these debates Bulwer-Lytton, as an occupant of the opposition front bench, took, like his colleagues, some part. The truth, however, is that throughout these earlier years of his political course he was learning his business, and, if unconsciously none the less really, was training himself for the great parliamentary effort, not, however, to be made till six years later. The precocity of his poetic boyhood did not prevent Bulwer-Lytton's best intellectual development from being late. It went on uninterruptedly throughout his life and, in his latest year, his mind showed greater power than in his prime. In 1855, however, when Palmerston was being kept in office by Conservative votes, Lytton was considered so good a tactician as to be chosen for performing a delicate party task. A Liberal free-lance Mr. H. A. Layard (the "Member for Nineveh") had already caused the Government some trouble; on June 19 he brought forward a motion on administrative reform, on which he had secured much support both in and out of Parliament. During their difficulties between free trade and protection in 1852, Lord Palmerston had saved the Conservatives from defeat by substituting a more gently worded resolution of his own for the uncompromising motion brought forward by Mr. C. P. Villiers. Palmerston's own troubles caused by Layard, in 1855, gave the Conservatives a chance of requiting the good turn he had done them three years earlier; accordingly they put up Sir Edward Lytton to replace Layard's amendment with a resolution which the Liberal ministry could honourably accept. That motion, whose final form

was identical with Lytton's original draft, gave Palmerstonianism a fresh lease of life.

But the earliest national crisis that called forth Lytton's energies belongs to the Crimean War period. Not till then had Lytton been admitted into the innermost councils held by Conservatives of Cabinet rank. In the July of 1855 Lytton was summoned to a conference between Lord Derby and Disraeli, assisted at by no other member of the party. The chiefs then decided no longer to delay their power of turning out the Coalition Government. That operation was to be begun five days later by the Member for Hertfordshire. The Vienna conference for settling the treaty of Paris (1856) had been attended by Lord John Russell for Great Britain. Briefly stated, the charges against the English plenipotentiary were that by a series of mistakes he had countenanced proposals incompatible with the instructions of the English Government and of its allies, and that he had not resigned office on finding himself manifestly in disagreement with his colleagues at home. The actual moving of this vote of censure was anticipated by Russell's resignation, but, though the motion itself thus dropped, the elaborately prepared speech introducing it was delivered, and brought its author compliments from both sides on its point and cleverness, as well as sympathies on its effect being weakened by Russell's retirement before it was heard at Westminster.

During the first week of March, 1857, the all-absorbing parliamentary topic was the Canton debate. Among the foremost in smoothing the path of Bulwer-Lytton's entrance to Parliament were, as has been seen in an earlier chapter, William Godwin and Sir John (then Doctor) Bowring. After a quarter of a century's interval, in a way which could not then have been foreseen, Bulwer-Lytton's name was again to be associated with the early friend who had undertaken to support him as Radical candidate for

Southwark. By 1854 the first editor of the Radical *Westminster Review*, now Sir John Bowring, had been improved into the Palmerstonian governor of Hong Kong. The Chinese authorities had boarded a small Chinese ship wrongfully flying the English flag, known as the *Iorcha Arrow*, and seized the crew. Bowring peremptorily demanded the surrender of the arrested sailors with an unconditional apology. The refusal of this ultimatum drew from Bowring orders for Canton's immediate bombardment by the English fleet. Conservatives, Radicals, and Peelites now combined at Westminster to throw out Palmerston by supporting Cobden's vote of censure on the Government's representative in China. Personally, Bulwer-Lytton may have been ready to serve an old friend, whatever his party and however bad his scrape, but he honestly detested unnecessary oppression of the weak by the strong ; he saw in Palmerston the spoiled son of Britannia, whose constant escapades were, as he himself put it, overlooked or rather encouraged by the fond mother because of her favourite son's winning intrepidity. Any other man, said Lytton, who had so bedevilled this country with all continental powers and parties would be swept into limbo. But the more mischief he does, the more Mamma England admires him. "What a spirit he has," cries Mamma ; and smash goes the crockery! Yet it was of Palmerston that Napoleon III, in Lytton's hearing, said, "No one could I ever have liked less for English Foreign Minister ; with all his self-will and intermeddling, he had an English heart, whether it beat right or wrong." Lytton, therefore, spoke and acted with Gladstone, Disraeli, the future Lord Salisbury, then Lord Robert Cecil, with Cobden, Roebuck, and their respective followers. Lytton himself entertained doubts as to the tactical soundness of the step ; for, he said privately, if Palmerston goes to the country the chances are he will gain and not lose. So it proved. The dissolution increased

Palmerston's supporters by rather more than a hundred, and re-established Palmerston himself in his old position. Palmerston's second premiership was, during its first month, agitated by the news of the Indian Mutiny. This convulsion of our Asiatic Empire fixed attention upon the anomalies of Indian Government. During a century a Company had acquired a dominion almost ten times as large and as populous as Great Britain. The Indian Government, indeed, was but nominally in the hands of the Company; its real head was the President of the Board of Control, speaking and acting through the secret committee of the Court of East India Company directors. There had for many years been a feeling that the rule of the Company should cease to exist in reality as well as in name, and that, as a possession of the English Crown, India should be governed through a Cabinet Minister. That principle, repeatedly affirmed by recent legislation actual or attempted, was the central feature in the 1858 India Bills, both of Palmerston and Derby. The debate on the earlier of these measures produced Bulwer-Lytton's last speech before becoming a Cabinet Minister. Of all contributions to the discussion, Lytton's was admittedly the most interesting. Had the manner or even the pronunciation of the words been as good as the matter, it might have proved also the most effective. The truth, however, is that, though he had now to a great extent overcome his earliest and worst faults, relaxed attention when he was on his legs at once betrayed him into the old defects. In the India Bill discussion, not being enough on guard against himself, he so slurred his words as to prevent his most telling points from being generally followed or even heard. More than once his voice literally so ran away with him that, when calmness would have been far more effective, his tones rose to a high point of noisy declamation, as if he would arouse the flagging attention by a trumpet blast of vocifer-

ous sound. Thus when special emphasis was wanted to impress the closing monosyllable of a striking passage, articulation failed and the only sound audible was that of a drawl which rendered all words alike. He had been criticizing the composition and functions of the new Indian councillors. "If," he said, "they are to be clerks call them so. If they are really to be councillors they must be free." But before that last word had been reached, the chords of utterance, as if resenting the previous strains needlessly placed upon them, seemed to give out, and the short, vigorous Saxon vocable which clenched a well-worded antithesis was undistinguishable save by those sitting close to the speaker. As was said at the time it might have been anything ending with "a" or "h," from "fra" to "yah."

Bulwer-Lytton's original exchange of the Liberal party for the Conservative had been followed by six years of brilliant service in and out of Parliament for his latest political associates. These facts combined with his personal position as a county member to establish his claim to Cabinet office. Before the end of the month (February, 1858) in which he had spoken on Palmerston's India Bill the Liberal Government was defeated over Milner Gibson's amendment to the measure known as the *Conspiracy to Murder Bill*, originating in Orsini's recent attempt on the French emperor's life. Palmerston's resignation and Derby's succession to office followed each other with dramatic rapidity. So quickly indeed, between February 19 and 28, had it all been done that, within a week of Palmerston's fatal defeat in the House, the new ministry under Derby had not only been formed, but was actually at work. The Colonial Office had, in 1858, as a separate department of State, only existed four years, its first controller having been Sir George Grey, in 1854. In 1806 Samuel Romilly owed his return to Parliament and his appointment as

Solicitor-General less to any legal distinction than to the effect produced by his then recent pamphlet on the French Revolution. By 1858 the *Caxtons* had been read throughout the English-speaking world; it had for the first time popularized the cult of the colonies, and helped Englishmen to appreciate the magnificent opportunities of their possessions beyond the seas. It had, therefore, at least as much to do with the selection of Lytton for the Colonial Office as Romilly's pamphlet had to do with the ministerial promotion so soon following it. The mention by Disraeli as leader in the Commons of Lytton's name to his chief, Lord Derby, was met with the question, "But has he a safe seat for re-election?" "I will," replied the Chancellor of the Exchequer, looking a little dubious, "go into the matter with him." The result of this further consideration disclosed a greater risk than the Prime Minister thought it wise to run. The Derby-Disraeli Cabinet of 1858 did not, therefore, at first include the author of the *Caxtons* among its Secretaries of State. The colonies, which had been ready to welcome the novelist as administrator, were given to the Prime Minister's eldest son, Lord Stanley. By August 3, 1858, however, Disraeli's acceptance of Russell's proposal to settle the matter by resolutions in committee amicably agreed to by both sides, secured the bill, finally transferring the Government of India from the Company to the Crown. Of this arrangement, Lytton it was who observed that if the result were not a very good bill, it had ceased to be a very good joke. Meanwhile, on the twelfth of April had come the political sensation caused by the proclamation of the Indian Governor-General, Lord Canning, involving, as it did, Lord Ellenborough's retirement from the Board of Control. Lord Stanley's transfer to the post thus vacated left the Colonial Office free for Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. At home the effect of this promotion, enthusiastically received by the colonies themselves, was

to increase the popular interest in a ministry whose House of Commons' chief was another novelist more famous even than Lytton himself, Benjamin Disraeli. Lytton's re-election on this appointment had not been beset by any of the dangers feared on the earlier occasion. It was not, however, carried through without a personal incident calling for a few further words on the relations between the Colonial Secretary and his wife. The separation of 1836 had been followed on the lady's part by open acts of war against her husband. These for some time took the form of violently abusive letters addressed directly to him or published against him in the newspapers, and by the circulation of incriminating anecdotes, in some cases purely vindictive rather than rigidly historical. One such story only set going by the lady a few days earlier, August, 1858, was to this effect. When she had for the last time been travelling with her husband abroad, as their carriage passed through a hamlet in the Italian Alps, it excited the attention of a very handsome peasant girl. With incredible want of tact, Lytton is reported to have drawn his wife's attention to the girl's admiring gaze. "It is," rejoined the lady, "not you, but that ridiculously eccentric dress of yours which excites notice." "We will soon see," answered Lytton, "whether the object of admiration is the costume or the wearer." With these words he proceeded to divest himself of his outer garments, afterwards settling himself in his place stripped to his underclothing. The newspaper attacks, beginning immediately after the separation deed, continued without intermission till the October of 1859. The plan pursued was to ascertain beforehand the day on which Lytton might be nerving himself for some special effort, a speech in Parliament, an address in the provinces, the launching of a new book, or the production of a fresh play. As an illustration of this last, the *Sea Captain*, as already mentioned, was performed for the first time October 31,

1839. "That asp, his wife," to use the description given not by the husband's partisans, but even by Lady Lytton's own friends, had timed a vituperative epistle from Paris to the *Morning Post* so that it might appear on the morning of the day fixed for producing his drama. On this subject it is necessary here only to mention an incident connected with the re-election, by his Hertfordshire constituents, of the Colonial Secretary of 1858. He left Knebworth for the neighbouring county town on a summer day of exceptional beauty,—everywhere the Conservative colours blew conspicuous, not more in the sky above than in the jackets of the postboys and in the favours of the crowd. He was in the middle of his address of thanks when, in a complete suit of deep yellow, the Hertfordshire Liberal colour, there advanced a female brandishing a yellow umbrella, with rouged face and yellow-dyed hair. Mounting the hustings, the lady saluted the newly made minister with, "Fiend, villain, monster, cowardly wretch, outcast. I am told," she hissed out, "you have been sent to the colonies. If they knew as much about you as I do they would have sent you there long ago." The rest is silence. For once Lytton's presence of mind failed him, or rather, he fainted, and knew no more till he found himself back at Knebworth in bed. The account now given is that of eye-witnesses of the scene, Mr. Bayliss, Lytton's Hertfordshire neighbour and friend, and the late Sir William Fraser. The husband and wife had not seen each other before the Hertford rencontre for twenty-two years. They never met again. The second Lord Lytton's friends, when all were juniors in the diplomatic service, commemorated the farewell interview in some verses of which a stanza may be given as specimen :

Who went to Hertford in a chaise
And lavished anything but praise
Upon the author of my days?
My mother.

Lady Lytton, it must be remembered, was an authoress herself; among her partisans, "George Sand" (Mme. Dudevant), to whom she had confided her conjugal grievances, stimulated her jealousy of her husband by protesting that his notoriety intercepted much of the higher fame which was her due. As a fact there is abundant evidence of the *Caxtons* success in 1850 having been gall and wormwood to the betrayed and persecuted wife, as she now posed. This her husband's crowning offence was aggravated three years later by the reception given to *My Novel*. The chronological order followed throughout in these pages makes this the place in which to say a few words about that work before proceeding with its author's colonial administration, and the remaining years of his parliamentary course. *My Novel* originated in Colburn's suggestion that the public would welcome, as an alternative to the literary diet furnished by Dickens with its monotonous lower-class flavour, some sketches of more or less polite life, character, and incident, connected by a suitably stirring plot. The first idea was to bring this out in monthly parts. That, however, would have been too much in the Dickensian manner. As it appeared first in *Blackwood's Magazine* and afterwards in book form, *My Novel* owed more to John Blackwood's shrewd suggestions and criticisms than, whatever may be said to the contrary, any of its author's plays had owed to Macready. After it had run through the magazine Lytton, having consulted with Forster, pressed for its reproduction in a series of volumes at a shilling each. Eventually a compromise was adopted, and *My Novel* first saw the light in four volumes and not the regulation three. Bulwer-Lytton's earlier parliamentary life had already necessitated some reference to Pisistratus Caxton's *Varieties in English Life*. What, in the case of Gibbon, the Hampshire militia was to the historian of the Roman Empire, the political and socio-political surround-

ings of his early youth were to the novelist in the second great instalment of the *Caxton* series. Hence one of the chief differences between Bulwer-Lytton on the one hand, and Dickens, Thackeray, or even Disraeli, on the other. Among all the writers of his time Lytton alone had been born to wide and varied social experiences. These steadily enlarging themselves throughout his boyhood and youth, supplied him with all the material for the array of scenes, characters, and reflections of *My Novel*. To strengthen the old English cordial feeling, to bind together those classes which the Manchester school are always trying to separate and the French school would plunge in the fusing-pot :—such in his own words was the purpose with which Bulwer wrote *My Novel*. As his model he had before him his idea of Voltaire's cold wit, warmed by Goldsmith's genial humour, and animated by his own desire to cement society instead of changing it. The two chief personages on whom the action mainly turns are Audley Egerton and Harley L'Estrange. These have been chums at Eton and friends in after life. The mutual attraction of each to the other arises not from likeness of character, but from dissimilarity. Egerton, the older, the stronger, and the more energetic, furnishes a complete contrast to the shy, dreamy L'Estrange. L'Estrange is in love with Nora Avenel, who is much beneath him and who has been sent by his mother, Nora's patroness, on a visit to be out of his way. Egerton, commissioned by L'Estrange to plead his cause with the young lady, falls in love with her himself. To provide himself with a counter attraction and so to prevent the betrayal of his friend, Egerton rushes into politics. He does, however, after all betray that friend and at the same time undoes himself. Here the chief moral interest of the plot begins. The rest is occupied with gathering up the story's different threads, averting the final blow, and turning revenge to pity. Egerton, humbled and dying,

comes out at last as the real hero of *My Novel*. As for the other personages, Squire Hazeldean, the clergyman and his wife, the Americanized Englishman, Dick Avenel, Riccabocca, his pipe, his red umbrella, his Machiavellian proverbs, a soft-hearted cynic, a simple sage, John Burley who writes pamphlets which noblemen sign, fishes for the one-eyed perch and dies babbling of green fields :—these are each and all of them indubitably original, as they reflect also the personal reminiscences of the novelist's early days, first at Heydon in Norfolk, then as the guest of his grandfather Warburton Lytton at Ramsgate and elsewhere. Violante, as the girlish embodiment of grace and innate nobility, forms one of the group whose other members are Leonard and Helen, a sort of Paul and Virginia, of whom Leonard, like the prize youth in Alphonse Carr's *Fort en Thèmes*, breaks his youth's invidious bar and becomes a great author. The third work in the Caxtonian vein came out and was partly written during the author's Colonial Secretaryship. In that novel the autobiographical reflections, Darrell's earlier distinctions as orator and statesman, together with a presence of mind which never fails, at once appeal to all. More admirable, and perhaps scarcely appreciated at their real worth, are the constructive art shown in the plot, and the really fine effects produced by the combined methods of retrospective narration and dialogue. The smaller characters, Gentleman Waife, Jasper Losely, and Arabella Crane, were said by their creator to have greatly benefited from Mr. John Blackwood's suggestions. *What Will He Do With It*, like the two preceding stories, the *Caxtons* and *My Novel*, brought the author £3000. The period to which *My Novel* belongs was memorable for the heaviest business transaction in which Lytton ever had a part. The publishing house whose head and founder was George Routledge paid the novelist £20,000 for a ten years' right of producing nineteen of his

novels in cheap popular form. The success of this operation, a great tribute to Mr. Routledge's sagacity and courage, shows how broad and deep must have been the writer's popularity, to form, as even at this large outlay it did, in part, the foundation of their fortune. "When, during my Cambridge days, I was tramping through the Lake Country with knapsack," Bulwer-Lytton once told Dickens, "I met an intelligent lad who struck me as knowing a great deal about books. His name, I recollect hearing, was Routledge. Who knows but that from his stock may have come the publishers who have used me so well?" Neither his profits from the Routledge venture (1853) nor five years later the preoccupations of the Colonial Office, beginning in the way already described, had the effect of seriously relaxing Bulwer-Lytton's literary industries. The only book, indeed, produced during the Secretaryship of State was *What Will He Do With It?* mentioned above. *Blackwood's Magazine*, however, at short intervals published in these years some of his ripest, most carefully thought-out and suggestive essays. The perfectly natural but highly finished style of these and the antithetically expressed worldly wisdom forming their subject-matter secured him a new kind of success, and emphasized his claim to be considered one among the chief teachers of his time. The *Haunters and the Haunted* (1859), though reissued in book shape and to-day one of his most familiar productions, appeared first as a short essay in *Blackwood*. It is noticeable for two personal reasons,—first because it illustrates the growing attraction of the supernatural for its author, secondly because it originated in his fondness, mentioned some time back, for occupying strange houses which took his fancy. Apart from this, it is not without a literary interest and significance of its own. Startlingly suggestive and creepily enthralling as may be the subject-matter, nothing can be more simple, unadorned, and, therefore, skilful than the

narration itself. Here at least Bulwer-Lytton's realistic effects are created by the same homely and artistic methods as those which, in Daniel Defoe's *Plague of London*, still cause the reader to see or even think he feels the swellings on the body symptomatic of the dread disease, to hear the death bell as it rings through the streets, and to gaze with horror upon the wagons laden with naked corpses on their way to a hurried burial.

CHAPTER XIII

AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE

Established at the Colonial Office—Intimacy between the new Secretary and his subordinates—Disappearance of the old party divisions—Lytton's alliance with the new Conservatives—Views on the duties of the State—Sir Edward's influence on Lord Carnarvon—Forces of empire building—Social changes in the colonies—Other workers in the imperial cause—Business at the Colonial Office—Creation of Queensland and British Columbia—Lytton's belief in the future development of British North America—Duties of a colonial Governor—Gladstone's Ionian mission—The envoy's "blandishments"—A long-lived islander—Studies in mysticism—Sir Edward's horoscopes of Gladstone and Disraeli—His prescience—Interest in South Africa—Hints of subterranean treasures—The stars' "discovery" of Sir J. B. Robinson—Social life in London and at Knebworth—A family anecdote—Lytton's presence of mind—Appearance and conversation with guests—Jeames's revenge—Relations with Thackeray—Last years of parliamentary work.

I HAVE learnt two great maxims in life, one to write as little as possible, the other to say as little as possible. So, in the course of 1858 to his permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir Frederic Rogers, afterwards Lord Blachford, said Lord Derby's newly-appointed Colonial Minister. The parliamentary Under-Secretary at the time was that fourth Earl of Carnarvon who himself presided over the colonies in 1866-7 and again 1874-8. During both these official terms Lord Carnarvon attributed much of the personal attachment with which he inspired the colonies to the fidelity with which he was enabled to follow Lytton's administrative example, social not less than political. Just eight-and-twenty years older than his parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lytton saw in Lord Carnarvon one destined some day to hold the office then filled by himself. Taking in him also something of a paternal interest, he left him as many routine details as he thought would prove educationally useful, and as consisted with a sense of his

own responsibility. If, as Rogers said, Sir Edward's extraordinary industry and power showed itself by way of writing perfect volumes of minutes, no chief could have evinced an estimate more just or grateful of obligations not only to the colleagues and subordinates of his own day, but to their predecessors. Some members of the Colonial service before his appointment seemed to have anticipated in Lytton a hard task-master. To propitiate him an official of the period actually began a despatch to Downing Street, "Seated on a rock with a volume of the *Caxtons* in my hand." Meanwhile, the Secretary of State was constantly expatiating to his colleagues and private friends on the fact that his office presented in all its arrangements and routine a perfect instance of what could be done for the State by a succession of men who, being scholars or philosophers first, had become officials, as it were, by accident. That, indeed, has been the unbroken history of the Colonial Office from its first beginnings to the present day. In its existing form the department only dates, as has been already seen, from 1854. Previously to that time, however, the permanent representative of colonial interests when his work was done at the Office of the Secretary for War never failed to be a man of intellectual mark. Such were Robert William Hay (1825), the earliest in the line, Sir James Stephen (1836), and Herman Merivale (1847), who before entering official life had, while fellow of Balliol, been political economy professor at Oxford. After the colonies formed a separate department, Lytton's permanent official, Rogers, had among his successors Frederic Elliot, F. R. Sandford, and Robert G. W. Herbert. To Lytton the permanent secretary of all his time and the parliamentary secretary Lord Carnarvon,—in a very special degree the latter—were official advisers and personal friends, the companions of his London walks and his guests at Knebworth, when there were no other visitors, for days and weeks together.

Before pursuing the policy which, carried out with such assistance, marked Lytton's colonial administration, something must be said of his political position on re-entering Parliament in 1852 and on taking office six years later. By the earlier of these dates, the Liberal programme, so far as he had ever approved it, was exhausted. Whiggism having fulfilled its task only wished to rest and be thankful. Lord Grey's successors in the extension of electoral reform were to be the Radicals from whom Lytton had long and entirely separated himself, and who were now occupied with the championship of those principles which Peel had made his own. It was a difference on these opinions which originally caused the Colonial Minister of 1858 to break with his Lincoln constituents. Meanwhile, the Tory party as Bulwer-Lytton first knew it had gone. The Peelites were gradually merging themselves in the new Liberals, the protectionists who took the place of the Tories acknowledged that if their political faith was successfully to re-assert itself, it must give up all thought of adherence to the old and narrow lines. These modernized Tories, loyal to the constitution but on all contemporary questions open to conviction, equally opposed to reaction and revolution, formed the nucleus of the Conservative party. Their declaration of enlightenment, their instinctive recoil from extremes, and their readiness in adapting themselves to the changing conditions of the age were the qualities developed by time and experience in Bulwer-Lytton himself. To the Conservatives, therefore, he had now naturally gravitated; for their benefit he had written, about the same time as his *John Bull* letters, the essay on the *Spirit of Conservatism*. In 1852, as Member for Hertfordshire, he had reached the threshold of middle age; during some years previously he had stood apart from active political life. He had used this interval of rest to review the practical results of the great constitutional change, to

play his part in securing which he had entered Parliament as a young man of twenty-eight. The imperfections he now saw in the accomplished work had produced a serene scepticism concerning the results reasonably to be hoped from any future legislative advance upon the point now gained. As a fact, Bulwer-Lytton's Liberalism had always been national, never democratic. By the middle of the nineteenth century the State's first duty was in Lytton's view both at home and abroad to organize all national gains, to maintain them in a state of order and efficiency which would secure their yielding the utmost amount of good to all subjects of the English Crown. The *Caxtons* presented in the form of dramatic narrative the chief articles of his public faith. The consolidation of our colonial empire, the maintenance on high ground of England's imperial power, the generous acceptance of our national duties, the dignified assertion of our international rank ;—such were the objects which, throughout the Victorian age and after, English intellect, English humanity should make their own. That involved the watchful development and discipline of those forces, social and intellectual, most conducive to the advancement or defence of England's true greatness. The Colonial Secretary of the second Derby-Disraeli administration was therefore a Conservative country gentleman keenly sympathizing with those of his own order who resented their betrayal by Sir Robert Peel. Peelites and Whigs were now his natural enemies. His chief abomination was the politics of Lancashire. Led, as he himself put it, by a coterie of Whig converts, the Manchester manufacturers had declared war against the territorial order with which he was identified not less by his interest as a landowner than by his sympathies as a politician.

The general ideas to which Bulwer-Lytton was bent on giving effect at the Colonial Office have been already adumbrated in the passage quoted above from the *Caxtons*, as

elsewhere in that novel. The Secretary of State had much more in common with his two chiefs in the Peers and Commons respectively than was possessed by Under-Secretary Carnarvon, some of whose finest qualities did not specially commend themselves either to Lord Derby or to Disraeli.* Lytton, however, not only appreciated his second-in-command, but found opportunities of raising him in the opinion of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He thus did much towards practically assuring Lord Carnarvon's promotion to the Colonies first in 1866, again in 1872, as well as towards promoting his administrative success on both occasions. At Oxford, H. L. Mansel, the future Dean of St. Paul's, had helped Lord Carnarvon to win his first class and had profoundly influenced him by applying the resources of a keen intellect and a prodigious memory to the genial intercourse of society. What, as a moulding intellectual influence, Mansel had been to Lord Carnarvon when at college, that Bulwer-Lytton became to him during the earlier part of his public course. From Lytton, Carnarvon learned to see the extent and success of our colonial empire in the well-assorted mixture of which the English people consists. Diversity of stock, as Lytton never wearied of pointing out to his pupil, has been usefully supplemented within these islands by an almost equal variety of climate and production. The mountains of northern Britain, the open South Downs that are the bulwarks of the Sussex coast, the mineral districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the pastures of Somerset or Dorset, the apple orchards of Devon, the cherry groves and hop gardens of Kent—of how many countries, exclaimed Lytton to his assistant, is this island the compendium. From such a crucible of mighty races has arisen the "keen and tempered steel of character"

* See, in Lord Beaconsfield's *Endymion*, the hit at Rawchester, alias "Nimini-Pimini."

which has made us what we are, a nation that, in the seventeenth century, disciplined in the school of military experience, engaged in the commerce of empire. To this enterprise we brought the trading aptitudes of the Dutch, seasoned by a broad common sense such as the Hollander had lacked as well as by the adaptability to new environments that France indeed had seldom failed to show, but that in the case of Great Britain was ballasted by capacities of conduct and achievement which the French never possessed. These were not the only features that the Colonial Minister of 1858 and his Under-Secretary agreed in recognizing as the forces which had called into existence and stimulated into progress that Greater Britain whose official representatives they had become. Into Lytton's political philosophy there entered none of Carlyle's scorn for the laws of supply and demand, or for the great producing classes by whom those laws were unconsciously being carried out. Nor, on the other hand, did he share Ruskin's conclusion that the economists themselves by their ignorance of their trade were responsible for most of the evils they deplored. To such effect, indeed, Ruskin had already written in the *Cornhill Magazine*. This view, however, found little favour with the general public. Thackeray, then editing the *Cornhill*, stopped the articles. The contributions thus arrested nevertheless became the foundation of a book considered by Ruskin "the best, that is the truest, thing he had ever written," *Unto this Last*. In a conversation about this book or about one of the *Fors Clavigera* essays, Lytton, who was present, had been amused to hear Ruskin tell Carlyle how his own studies in political economy had brought him to the conclusion that nobody knew anything about it. No more than Carlyle had Lytton ever acquiesced in the Westminster economists' doctrine of *laissez-faire* and *laissez-passer*, or held the opinion that, free from the State's and the tax-gatherer's interference,

the industrial classes would find their prosperity assured by the eternal laws of competition, of supply and demand. At the same time, he believed individual effort to be the foundation of all collective prosperity, and one of the chief attractions which the colonies had for him was the fact of their originating in private enterprise rather than in public co-operation.

There were special reasons which made the year 1858 an epoch in our colonial history and provided a rare opportunity for Bulwer-Lytton's sympathetic imagination and for the patriotic industry of his pupil and subordinate, Lord Carnarvon. Five years previously Sir William Molesworth, after a short official apprenticeship as Commissioner of Works, was advanced to the control of the Colonial Office, only, however, to die a few months after having achieved that height of his ambition. In the Department of Works he had first practically realized the lack of home labour for English workmen, in the colonies he saw the industrial opening which had become a national need. Lytton's secretaryship followed a season of natural dissatisfaction among colonists with the Colonial Minister in Lord John Russell's administration. Earl Grey, the reformer's son, had been responsible for the colonies in 1846, before they formed a special department. He was a man of great intellectual power, but devoid of any personal concern for the infant and extremely sensitive communities of which he had charge. His succession by a minister of temperament as frigid and of bearing as arbitrary and autocratic as himself would probably have cost Britain the Australias. The *Caxtons* had been published, 1849 (50), before, that is, our possessions beneath the Southern Cross were known to be a goldfield, but not before they had sent back to the mother country many Englishmen with fortunes made in farming. These abounded so magnificently throughout the Hyde Park district, that Lytton might well speak of

Westbourne Terrace as *Australia Row*. If the *Caxtons* had been popular in London it created a long-enduring enthusiasm in Melbourne and Sydney. Already the Australian protest against making our empire at the Antipodes a place of criminal exile had found an authoritative echo in the mother country. Archbishop Whately was the first, in order of time as in order of importance, to urge the discontinuance of the convict *régime*. Transportation, dating from 1787 and not entirely abolished till 1867, was not, as Lytton pointed out in his despatches, a British invention, nor had it in its day been entirely without its uses; in proof of this, Secretary Sir Edward Lytton mentioned that in 1835 Darwin, visiting Tasmania to examine how things were with our trans-oceanic criminals, had found that the system turned unproductive jail-birds into industrious, well-behaved, though seldom morally regenerated workmen. The effect of Whately's protest was emphasized not only by Lytton's policy, but by his literary example. The colonial vein just tapped in the last part of the *Caxtons* was to be more fully worked six years afterwards by Charles Reade in *Never Too Late to Mend*. In 1867 this novel was dramatized at the "Princess's." But the book had done its work. The criminal scenes reproduced on the stage were resented as a mischievous anachronism. The Colonial Secretary of 1858, now out of office and a peer, asked his opinion by the manager of the theatre, frankly hoped that the piece would not have a long run. The wish received its fulfilment in the early withdrawal of the play. Throughout his life or till his health gave way Lord Lytton was generally looked up to as the honorary head of the Australian community in England. But for the initiative of the *Caxtons*, Australia would have been without the services she received from Charles Reade's romance. These two novels, therefore, had together done for the Australias much what had once been done by *Oliver Twist* for the

new Poor Law, or by Thackeray, in his *Essays on going to see a man hanged*, for the abolition of public executions.

The general temper of Sir Edward Lytton's colonial administration expressed itself in his specific acts of policy. He had not been in power a fortnight when a stroke of his pen abolished the old mail contract with Australia, a blunder in its origin and a disaster in its results. After this came the removal of a long-standing cause of quarrel between France and England in their African relationships. Albreda, at the mouth of the Gambia, was then a French possession. Portendic on the African coast belonged to England. The interests of both countries were consulted by an exchange in the ownership of these places. At the same time, Lytton's concession to France of the Portendic gum trade entirely effaced many other causes of friction with our nearest continental neighbour. After this the West Indian planters had to thank the Colonial Office for a relief from their embarrassments by an Encumbered Estates Bill on the same principle as that applied to Ireland in 1849. This measure was not only sound in itself, but for party reasons politic and for family associations congenial. The West India interest, though less powerful than formerly, still made itself felt in the House of Commons. Both Sir Edward Lytton and Lord Carnarvon had some hereditary connection with the West Indies,—the former on his father's side, the latter through his maternal ancestors, the Longs and Beckfords, some of whom, like the Bulwers, have their graves in Jamaica. About the same time Lytton had some passing trouble with a committee on West Indian matters incidentally imputing to the Colonial Secretary something like disregard for the liberties of the British Crown's coloured subjects. In Downing Street Sir Edward Lytton showed himself not only a skilful administrator, but a considerable empire builder as well. To this day two Australasian towns bearing the name Lytton in New South Wales and in

Queensland, as well as a third on the other side of the Atlantic, remind posterity that Queensland, as distinct from New South Wales, of which it was formerly part, and British Columbia all came into existence during the tenure of office by the author of the *Caxtons*. The termination of the monopoly belonging, since 1670, to the Hudson's Bay Company was involved in the Imperial process which added British Columbia to the English Crown under circumstances now briefly to be explained. During the time of Lytton's Liberal predecessor in Downing Street, Mr. Labouchere, afterwards Lord Taunton, the Colonial Office had received rumours of gold embedded in the quartz, and dispersed in nuggets on the banks of the Fraser River, midway between the Gulf of Georgia and the verge of the Rocky Mountains. The Whig Government, of which Mr. Labouchere was a member, were pledged to support the existing Company's monopoly; the intelligence of the hitherto unsuspected treasures seemed inconvenient, and therefore remained for the present an official secret. If the reports proved true, the corporate monopoly was manifestly doomed, nor would public opinion at home be satisfied with anything less than the whole of British North America being opened up to the individual energies of Englishmen. On succeeding Mr. Labouchere, therefore, Sir Edward Lytton lost no time in ascertaining the accuracy of the momentous news. He then introduced a bill for abolishing the Hudson's Bay Company. The measure went through Parliament with little more than a nominal opposition. This bill, said a competent critic, Mr. Rochester, must ultimately result in the breaking up of the two great oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic, by bringing into direct communication with each other the new colony and the old, British Columbia and Canada; these must and will be united by a grand trunk railway, carried boldly across the entire breadth of the North American continent.

Lytton's own words in one of his many speeches on our new trans-Atlantic possession were :—" To fulfil the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race in spreading intelligence, freedom, and Christian faith wherever Providence gives us dominion of the soil, wherever industry and skill can build up cities, is the duty to which we now stand committed." The seventh Secretary of State for the Colonies since the institution of that post in 1854, Lytton, by his policy in British Columbia, began the confederation of our North American possessions. At the same time he foresaw that the movement would be continued, as it was in 1867, and that, as also happened in 1873, it would not rest till the inclusion of Prince Edward Island completed the realization of the Canadian Dominion which, half a generation earlier, he had as an empire builder planned. A little later the Colonial Secretary secured the despatch to Columbia of some Royal Engineers to whom he bade farewell in an exceedingly happy and telling speech. "You are going," he said, "not to fight against men, but to conquer nature, not to overthrow kingdoms, but to establish new communities under the sceptre of Queen Victoria." On the other side of the world the severance of Queensland from New South Wales was the occasion of an utterance by the Colonial Minister not less memorable than that just quoted. Queensland, now autonomous, had, in 1858, received as its first Governor, Sir George Bowen. Among the earliest official memoranda made by Lytton is a paper addressed to Bowen and setting forth his chief's view of a Colonial Governor's duties. The extreme reserve traditionally studied in a Governor's despatches to Whitehall is regarded by the Secretary of State "as carried to inconvenience and abuse, because, among other reasons, questions affecting free colonies may come before Parliament without the home Government being in a position to explain them." Certain communications between the Colonial Office and the local "Government House" must

of, course be absolutely private and strictly confidential. Often, however, the Governor may advantageously write fully and freely to the Under-Secretary or the minister at home about matters on which frankly stated details will be most useful in London. Yet even in such communications the writer will do well to touch as little as possible on names and parties in the colony. Another feature in Sir Edward Lytton's colonial administration calls for a few words. The Crown agents of the colonies were originally employed for the transmission of railway plant and other material beyond the seas. Lytton first conceived the idea of imparting to them something of a social importance belonging to ambassadors from a foreign state. They thus, though by slow degrees, began to be channels of communication between colonial premiers and the home Government. This development became more marked in later years, first during Lord Kimberley's Secretaryship of State, then under Lord Carnarvon. On Aristotle's principle of the half being more than the whole,* both these always recognized the real author of this arrangement in Secretary Lytton.

"To reconcile to the science of practical liberty a race that speaks the Greek language might be a noble episode in your career." So, during the October of 1858, wrote Sir Edward Lytton to Mr. Gladstone, then a Conservative M.P., in a letter pressing on him a mission to the Ionian Islands. The Colonial Secretary, in essays then written but not published, had often referred incidentally to the Conservative member for Oxford University, chiefly in connection with Gladstone claret.† Any personal acquaintance between the two was recent and slight; nor did Gladstone know anything about Lytton's classical acquirements till Under-Secretary Sir Frederic Rogers had shown the first scholar among public men of his time some scraps of Greek prose and Greek iambs; (the art of composing these Lytton had

* *Ethics*, I, 7, 23.

† e.g. *Cantoniana*, p. 50.

gained when Waddington's pupil at Ealing, and he had beguiled a few odd minutes in scribbling them down on office paper.) * The suggestion of Gladstone as envoy had come from the Under-Secretary Lord Carnarvon; the mission itself was solely the idea of Sir Edward Lytton. The account of this business is now so universally accessible in Viscount Morley's encyclopædic biography † that here it is only needful briefly to recall a very few explanatory details. In the year of the Vienna Treaty, 1815, by an agreement between Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria, the seven little sea-girt communities scattered along the Epirus coast to the southern extremity of the Peloponnese were constituted into a single free and independent polity as the United States of the Ionian Islands, under the immediate and exclusive protection of England; these states regulated their own home government, the function of Great Britain being "to employ a particular solicitude with regard to their legislation and general administration." Local experiments at self-rule were made alternately with democratic, oligarchic and aristocratic results till, after the revolutionary year of 1848, Ionian autonomy assumed a purely popular character, spasmodically controlled by the Colonial Office, whose action in the matter had caused Lytton's old Cambridge friend, Charles Buller, to rally him and his department with a familiar witticism about lighting the fire and then stopping up the chimney. The Ionian islanders' grievances, as they had long poured in upon Downing Street, often seemed trivial, and grew out of local jealousies. Thus Zante was clamorous for a pier not because of its being really needed, but for the reason of Cephalonia's having been recently presented with a hospital. Sometimes the Ionian claim was for

* This little incident I had from the late Lord Granville, who added: "In the same way I have known Lord Hartington, while waiting for a deputation, to amuse himself by writing out the binomial theorem."

† *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. I, p. 594, etc.

international privilege of an entirely exceptional kind. Thus, as Sir Edward Lytton had found out, the adjudication by British consuls on the quarrels of Ionians resident in Turkey was not enough for Ionians, who claimed to be judged by what they called their own Ionian law. The Colonial Secretary's despatches to Special Commissioner Gladstone were often moral homilies which might have been taken bodily from his novels or his Caxtonian essays. A charitable temper, a conciliatory and patient attitude formed the minister's chief commendation to his representative. Mutual forbearance and good sense might, in Lytton's opinion, have prevented all difficulties. In the situation which had developed itself, Mr. Gladstone was to acquaint his chief with any defects in the Ionian constitution such as legislation might remove, feeling sure the while that not only a sense of official duty, but his own share in Mr. Gladstone's Homeric scholarship, would secure to his representative on the spot the Colonial Secretary's support in whatever might be for the welfare of the Hellenic race. At one point Sir Edward Lytton made a strong stand; such was his consideration for Ionian sentiment that he had wished Mrs. and Miss Gladstone, as they actually did, to accompany the Commissioner for the purpose of discovering from the Ionian women delicate matters of local feeling on which feminine information might be particularly useful. The idea had got abroad that, while retaining Corfu and Taxo, England would surrender the southern islands to the native population. At once, however, on this point the Colonial Minister unmistakably declared himself. Not for one moment could he dream of surrendering any national possession in eastern Europe or of abolishing an insular constitution conferred by charter, without the consent of the English legislature and of the great powers. Mr. Gladstone's interest in the Eastern Church had weighed with him in accepting the commission and

also brought him, while performing its duties, into some little trouble. The Commissioner had publicly kissed a Greek archbishop's hand; the *Times* charged the envoy with carrying his blandishments beyond the bounds of dignity and common sense. The general result of Lytton's colonial policy in this matter was to improve Ionian institutions, to extend the Ionian element and contract the British sphere. There still remained, however, in the insular parliament a desire for union with Greece, and among the population the distrust and dislike of England and all her works. Even the convenience of the newly made British roads was resented scarcely less than the presence of the British soldier. Five or six years after Lytton's declaration against divesting England of her Ionian possessions came (1863-4) the British cession of the islands to the Greek monarchy. By an appropriate coincidence the second Lord, the first Earl of Lytton, was Secretary of Legation at Athens during the season of the islands' surrender to Greece. He not only observed, but described in a report of much interest the happy results of the mission sent and the reforms begun by his father, mentioning with some detail the great improvements, social and political, in the Ionian Islands, due to Secretary Lytton's initiative. Thus since 1858 justice had been fairly administered, order had been strictly maintained. Life and property were secure; road-making and other public works afforded employment for all available labour. To the son who saw all this * fell the less satisfactory experience of witnessing events that verified a prediction on which his father had ventured. Always, as has been seen, against their abandonment by England, the Colonial Secretary of 1858 had placed on official record this much-needed warning: "If we give up these places they will gradually relapse into primitive barbarism." In 1859 Sir Henry Drummond Wolff succeeded Sir George

* *Personal and Literary Letters of the Earl of Lytton*, Vol. I, p. 177.

Bowen as Ionian Lord High Commissioner. Congratulating the new official on the promotion he had been able to bestow, the Colonial Secretary added, "If I did not hope you, or perhaps Robert" (his son), "might have something to say on the subject, I should be tempted to put into a Blackwood article a few paragraphs about the popular folk-lore of the Islands as it has found its way to me at my office. Though I know not his name, there was recently an old Ionian islander who wished for no more trouble from his children. He therefore called them together. Here, he said, is some land which I intend to keep for myself; after my death it will go to the church and can never be yours, so spare yourselves the trouble of thinking about it. What, however, there is over and above that you shall have. So go your ways, and let me die in peace. After this he seemed to enjoy a perfect rejuvenescence; his hair and teeth grew again, and he went on vigorously till he reached or passed his hundredth year. Then he married and died at once." Meanwhile the minister who had sent Mr. Gladstone and the ladies of his family, with Lord Stanmore and Sir James Lacaita as private secretaries, to the Hellenic Archipelago was himself relieving the monotony of official correspondence by toying with the supernatural. During a holiday at Wildbad in the September of 1860 he completed a long-meditated horoscope of Mr. Gladstone begun soon after the commencement of the Ionian business; at the same time he honoured with a like attention the friend of his youth, now his Cabinet colleague, Disraeli. In the case of Gladstone the chief truth revealed by the conjunction of the heavenly bodies was that, whatever his society and his occupations, he would always be at heart a solitary man.* As regards Disraeli, the stars had been more communicative, and foretold very high honours compared with birth or actual achievements would follow a happy marriage, leaving

* Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. I, p. 197.

him free for ambitious objects. Much feared by opponents, highly esteemed by friends, he would rise far higher than his warmest admirers could foresee and would be covered with extraordinary honours at the time of his death. Necromancy, chiromancy, geomancy, and aeromancy were among the forms of divination in which Sir Edward Lytton dabbled, whether beneath the several London roofs belonging to him at different times or at Knebworth. After the separation he had exchanged the Hertford Street house for one in the neighbouring Charles Street, where his "Pompeii room" was completed far more elaborately than it had been planned in outline at the earlier abode. Subsequently Lord Lytton occupied at different times two houses in Park Lane, living most of his Colonial Secretaryship at No. 1 in that thoroughfare. At this address, as well as at Knebworth, he often entertained a medium and a table-rapper, both agreeable in their way, while at his Hertfordshire home, during the early 'sixties, he was visited daily by a London mesmerist in whom he believed as the healer of all his ailments, but who never succeeded in throwing him into the trance. At the Colonial Office it used to be suggested that some of his pet supernatural agencies, in advance of any actual discoveries being made, might have revealed to him South Africa's wealth in subterranean treasures. While at the Colonial Office Sir Edward Lytton had talked more than once of a visit to South Africa in Under-Secretary Lord Carnarvon's yacht. The voyage was never made, but nothing from South Africa reached Downing Street without being considered in all its bearings by the Colonial Secretary, who in this way had acquainted himself with the region not much less intimately than if he had personally witnessed the operation of a young Cradock agriculturist, the future Sir J. B. Robinson, who, so far having only turned over the soil, would, as Lytton had a presentiment, some day unearth diamonds. Before that

vision, in 1867, had been accomplished the Colonial Office had passed to Lord Carnarvon as Sir Edward Lytton's first Conservative successor. The ex-minister's Libyan interests were not, however, on that account the less keen or fresh. The novelty of its products always invested, throughout his life, South Africa with the same kind of attraction for Lytton as it had for the historian Tacitus. A region of limitless possibilities, new Indias of a coming generation, the Australias of ages yet to exist—all these were foreseen and often dwelt on by him in his table-talk about the "Dark Continent." The time, he predicted, was coming when events would compel Liberal and Conservative statesmen alike to change in Africa their policy of foregoing further tropical annexations and of dealing by treaty only with savage chiefs.*

At one or other of the houses already mentioned, at 19 Park Lane or at 12 Grosvenor Square, Lytton might be found throughout most of every session and season. After his return to Parliament in 1852 he went more into society and appeared more frequently at clubs than he had formerly done. His chief companion during this later period was his most intimate friend Lord Henry Bentinck,

* The French occupation of New Caledonia had come, in 1853, five years before Lytton's Colonial Secretaryship. Other groups or single islands in the Pacific were afterwards appropriated by French or Germans without English protest. The home Government disapproved the Australian annexation of half New Guinea, would not, in 1883, ratify the Cameron Treaty giving us the Congo basin or Central Africa. Disraeli had further declined the Cameroons as well as the Congo. Gladstone's refusal included not only all these places, but Zanzibar and any share in New Guinea. The pressure of foreign competition forced the ministerial hand, whether Conservative or Liberal. Before the nineteenth century was out Zanzibar had become a British Protectorate, the British flag waved over more than a quarter of New Guinea; the Cameroons, rejected both by Disraeli and Gladstone, would have been to-day a British possession had not England's hesitation made it a present to Germany. One can scarcely imagine a fulfilment more circumstantial of the Lyttonian prophecy than these occurrences afford. "There is no colonial problem presented already in any part of our foreign dominions, tropical or not, by which we need be surprised at being confronted in Africa between now and the middle of the twentieth century," was another Lyttonian forecast so far certainly not falsified.

brother of the Duke of Portland and of Lord George Bentinck, the turfite and protectionist who first brought out Disraeli. With him from the *Athenæum*, always his chief resort, Lytton strolled into the Carlton or less often went further west to play a rubber of whist at the Portland Club then in Stratford Place, Oxford Street. Bulwer-Lytton's card-playing days were confined almost exclusively to his youth. After an experience in Paris already related at sufficient length, he renounced gambling of every kind; except to make up a friendly rubber he seldom or never touched a card afterwards, though he remained a good whist-player to the last. At that game he had perfected himself while a very young man belonging to Graham's Club. This was frequented, 1836-7, by the best whist-players of the day, and it was here that their leader, Lord Henry Bentinck, first introduced the method of calling for trumps known afterwards as the "blue Peter." This club had been left by Bulwer in 1836, because of the scandal connected with it. One of its titled members, the then Lord De Ros, premier baron in the British peerage, with a title between six and seven centuries old, of great wealth and belonging to the most exclusive Pall Mall and St. James's Street resorts, was charged with habitually marking the cards at the whist-table, substituting while the play went on a doctored pack for the original. Other charges of the same kind constrained their subject to bring an action for libel in the King's Bench before Lord Denman, February, 1837. Lord De Ros received a good character at the card-table and elsewhere from witnesses like Lord Clare, Lord Wharncliffe, and many others, but the evidence of tampering with the cards was too strong to prevent the jury's returning anything but an adverse verdict. Graham's Club was dissolved, only, however, to be reconstituted. But though it was thus purged of undesirable members, Edward Bulwer, like Lord Henry Bentinck, had nothing

more to do with Graham's. His connection with the stage and acquaintance with its chief representatives never took him into any Bohemian coteries. To the house of call chiefly affected by intellectual workers behind and before the footlights he at no time belonged, even as a guest he never entered it. Indeed, he constantly went out of his way to ridicule "a great house, hired in the neighbourhood of the theatre by its principal patrons, and called the Garrick Club." * Nothing, he ironically adds, more fits a man for his profession than living with people who know nothing about it. Only think how much better Kean would have played Richard if you had tied him to lords and squires and other tame gentlemen in the Garrick Club.† He had dropped the Bulwer when inheriting (1844) his mother's property. After that, whether in Parliament, in his Downing Street office, in publishers' parlours, in editorial sanctums, in the joint-stock palaces of Pall Mall and St. James's, in Mayfair or Belgravian assemblies, he was always Lytton of Knebworth. Of Knebworth itself he has left so complete an account (*The Student*, p. 54) that it is enough to indicate the place where that description may be found. Both house and surroundings were, in Bulwer-Lytton's day, as much a part and an illustration of their owner as any set passages of self-portraiture to be found in his essays or novels. The environing country is that of *Devereux*, the *Caxtons*, *Night and Morning*. The house itself is well situated on a hill in the prettiest part of the county; inside is a mass of old oak, coeval with its owner's earliest ancestors, of cabinets, of rare steel blades from Toledo, of early Christian catacomb mementos from Rome. The walls are overlaid

* Details substantiating this statement on p. 229 of *King Edward VII and His Court*. These particulars concerning the individuals who first promoted the Garrick Club were given me by its then oldest member, the late Lord Glenesk, who was good enough to be my own proposer or seconder on my election to the club in, I think, 1883.

† *Asmodeus at Large* in *The Student*, pp 292-4.

by armour and tapestry, by plumes, banners, crystal phials that had once contained the elixir of life, by parchments inscribed with cabalistic figures, and with much else that might have served as models for the illustrator of Bulwer-Lytton's romances. All was characteristic of Knebworth's master, though sometimes, as Matthew Arnold on his visit in 1869 thought, "revealing stucco for stone, rubbish from Wardour Street instead of real old curiosities." On this point the "apostle of sweetness and light" was not the best judge. The Knebworth antiquities, whether knightly relics, Anglo-Saxon souvenirs, or mediæval furniture, were genuine. Their possessor knew too much of decorative art and of money's worth to be taken in by spurious imitations, and those who visited Knebworth in the first Lord Lytton's day, after a morning's ramble through its alcoves and galleries within or among its statuary, kiosques, Horace's garden and fountain without, had seen not only their host's favourite possessions, but the true reflection of his literary and artistic self as well. Successive marriages with Robinsons especially, though with others, too, had brought immense wealth at different times into the Lytton family. The nineteenth-century master of Knebworth, while acting as the cicerone of his visitors, let as far as possible the different objects in his house and grounds tell their own story: beneath that old tree the Lytton of the period received an invisible warning to go not for king, but for Parliament. Those stables and the loft above them three or four generations later became the monument of Robinson Lytton's meditated desertion of King George for the Young Pretender. Robinson, in fact, having buckled on his sword and saddled his horse, was on the point of riding off to Charles Edward's headquarters. He had, however, to reckon with his wife. That lady, knowing him to be occupied with his horse in its stall, and shrewdly suspecting his design, turned the key

in the stable door and locked her husband in. Food and wine were silently lowered to him from the loft above. The door, however, was not opened till, after a few days, the Jacobites were in full retreat from Derby and the last hope of a Stuart restoration had gone. The Knebworth hospitalities reached their height and were long kept at it during the Colonial Secretaryship period. It was then that Sir Edward Lytton gave striking proof of that presence of mind which impressed all who knew really anything of him. A young colonist having taken up an interesting little china ornament from the mantelpiece, accidentally let it slip through his fingers. In another second it would have been shivered into atoms on the hearthstone. The host, standing by, quietly stretched out his long arm, arrested the knick-knack in its fall, and with the words, "Well fielded, I think," replaced it on the chimneypiece. One other instance of this kind may be given. Some little time earlier Sir Edward Lytton was dancing with a lady in a Somerset county ball-room at Taunton. A soft fleecy article carried by his partner caught fire. Before there was time for panic or the mishap had been noticed, he had extinguished the flame and restored the article but little injured to its owner.* At the Knebworth house-parties the host sometimes, at 9.30, presided over a general breakfast-table. More frequently the first meal of the day was taken by the visitors at whatever hour each found most convenient. Of Sir Edward Lytton himself a glimpse might be caught upon the staircase in an old shooting-coat, or wrapped in a dressing-gown as he flitted spectre-like through one of the passages. Those who had seen him in the morning were struck by the hard deep lines seaming the worn face, even when perfectly reposed. At the dinner-

* Some who witnessed both these incidents told them to the present writer, the Taunton ball-room lady being his first cousin, Miss Lethbridge, afterwards Mrs. Vincent Stuckey.

hour all this had vanished. The dining-room showed the whole height of the house, was traversed at one end by a gallery, and was at the other a blaze of gold and silver plate, of silk hangings and of heraldic monstrosities in wild and copious luxuriance. The host, perfectly groomed at every point, entered this apartment radiant from his valet's hands. The furrows had been smoothed out on the face; the whole figure was that of debonair middle age. Deafness prevented the master of the house from taking part in general conversation, but after dinner, sitting on a divan smoking a long hookah, he justified the description given of him by Charles Dickens as the best conversationalist of the day. One after another the chief members of the company approached their host to hear him, between the puffs of his pipe, describe how Napoleon III's seven years' solitary reflection at Ham, when his mind and experience were mature, enabled him to obtain and keep a throne, or how Palmerston's friend, so much used by him in more or less secret investigations, Count Strzelecki, was the original of Count Smalltalk in *Pickwick*. The only occasion on which many of his visitors ever heard him mention his own writings was to illustrate a story about the founder of the Mormon polygamy. Brigham Young, with his numerous wives, had attended a performance of the *Lady of Lyons*; he sat through it quietly enough till the agony was piled up a little too high. Then, followed by his spouses in procession, he left the theatre, remarking, "I won't stand such a d——d row being made about one woman." Bulwer-Lytton's personal reminiscences, when he was in the vein, were noticeable for simplicity and freshness. Among Mme. Grisi's admirers, not the least ardent was Lord Castlereagh; he was challenged eventually by the actress's husband, M. de Melci. In the duel that followed, Castlereagh fired in the air, but was wounded by de Melci in the wrist. Some years later Bulwer-Lytton, who had not

then heard of this incident, occupied a stall at the opera immediately behind the *prima donna*'s old admirer, since then developed into Lord Londonderry. "The old lady," murmured Bulwer to Londonderry, "wears well, does she not?" "So it seems," was the reply; "it's some time since I've seen her." Lytton's Knebworth hospitalities during his Colonial Secretaryship were the precursors of those for which Highclere became famous when Lord Carnarvon held Sir Edward Lytton's old office. In both cases colonists of all degrees with their families were welcomed. At Knebworth it was a rather precocious little colonial miss who said to the host, "Sir Edward, if you could be a bird, I am sure you would choose to be an eagle that you might soar." "By no means," was the reply, "he is too fond of Mrs. Eagle." The Duke of Sutherland sometimes brightened these Knebworth gatherings with the good things he occasionally said; e.g. "Honeymoons are too long. Fancy having to spend a month alone with a woman you scarcely know. The real honeymoon is the month next before marrying." About his contemporaries in letters Lytton sometimes spoke pretty freely to acquaintances who were not writers themselves. He had satisfied himself that Thackeray's bitterness against the House of Hanover originated in this way;—the lecturer on the Four Georges, when living in the Old Court suburb, had for his neighbour at Kensington Palace the Duke of Sussex, whose good offices in some literary or social matter the novelist had unsuccessfully tried to secure. Bulwer-Lytton had another favourite Thackeray story. In *Punch* and elsewhere Thackeray's gibes at Jeames are still remembered; the original of "Jeames of Buckley Square" was not a footman or any kind of flunkey by occupation, but the fashionable reporter of the *Morning Post*, a certain Foster, who took care that Thackeray's name should never appear in his paper. Resenting this exclusion Thackeray, it seems,

walked up to the table in the entrance hall of the great house where was seated Mr. Foster recording the illustrious guests. "My name," said the author of *Vanity Fair*, "is Thackeray." Without lifting his eyes the journalist said, "Yes, and mine is Jeames." So long as "Jeames" lived Thackeray was ignored by the chronicle of fashion. With respect to the relations between Lytton and Thackeray, the latter, as has been stated in an earlier chapter, expressed, through the friend of both men, John Forster, regret for his earlier attacks. After a short interval, however, the old gibes and ridicule were renewed in *Punch*. Still that did not prevent Lytton, after the success of *Vanity Fair*, from sending by John Forster his congratulations to its author, with overtures for a personal and permanent reconciliation. The proposal remained without an answer.

Whether he spoke in or out of office, Bulwer-Lytton's set discourses were literary as well as oratorical efforts. Of these only two more remain to be noticed. The first was the oration of March 21, 1859, defending, from the Treasury bench, the Conservative Reform Bill against an amendment of Lord John Russell. In this speech Sidney Herbert, who answered it, admitted that Lytton's vigorous rejoinders to what had been said on the other side showed more debating power than on any other occasion. By dint of undaunted patience, improving to the last, the Colonial Minister brought the House down in repeated bursts of applause. This splendid piece of declamation, said Disraeli in his letter to the Queen, was not prevented by Lytton's fantastic manner and painful mismanagement of his voice from occasionally reaching even to the sublime; further, it embodied an analysis of the English Constitution and of democracy as rich as, but more powerful than anything of Burke. One of Bulwer-Lytton's latest topics in the House of Commons was the malt tax in 1865, but actually his

last speech in Parliament, April 13, 1866, dealt with the Liberal Reform Bill of that year. Among the speeches he carefully prepared but did not deliver were orations on the British Honduras question and the Conservative Reform Bill of 1867.

CHAPTER XIV

LAST YEARS AND THEIR WORK

Peerage, 1866, coincides with gradual physical failure, continuance of intellectual energies universally acknowledged—Services as statesman and orator, with ascendancy and popularity not affected by competition of Dickens and Thackeray—The patron of writers and defender of literature—Lady Lytton's ideal villain, but the ideal gentleman of others—Foes in the household, but outside real knowledge and admiration go together—Gallenga's moral and material helper—Effect of Lytton's conversation on the Italian—Dickens and Foister on the new peer—The Turkish Grand Vizier at Knebworth—Fuad Pasha on his own wives, and others'—Advice to aspirant novelists—Latest literary works—The *New Timon* continued in *St. Stephen's*—Revolt against the Lyttonian style—The *Lost Tales of Miletus*, his last considerable poetical work—Opinions of contemporary writers in prose and verse—Origin of *A Strange Story*—His last two works, *Kenelm Chillingly* and *The Parisians*, contrasted—Sudden death in harness, and burial in Westminster Abbey—Benjamin Jowett's eulogy.

LYTTON'S House of Commons career opened in the period of the Grey Reform Bill; it closed shortly after the later Reform Bills brought forward successively by Liberal and Conservative cabinets had wrecked the two administrations by which those efforts were made. The Conservative failure, in 1859, to settle the outstanding electoral questions coincides with the close of Lytton's official life. In 1866 the Conservatives had returned to power, but when, in 1867, Disraeli was preparing finally to settle by household franchise the difficulty which had so long perplexed parties and destroyed Governments, his friend, the ex-Colonial Secretary, had become Lord Lytton of Knebworth. He was now sixty-three years of age; there had of late been no improvement in his health. The deafness as well as the difficulties of the voice persistently increased rather than diminished. He had at this time, allowing for the absence between 1841 and 1852, passed twenty-four years of active

life in Parliament. None of his contemporaries, Disraeli alone excepted, whether as speaker or administrator, had rendered services more brilliant and sustained to his party or his country. Since Macaulay's death, in 1859, in excellence and variety of literary achievement he had surpassed all his contemporaries. Since he had first won the public ear, he had encountered the formidable competition of Dickens and Thackeray. Neither of these affected his relations with the public or interfered with the sale of his books. It was, therefore, a genuinely national popularity beyond the power of the critics to touch, whether for evil or good. For thirty-eight years he had educated as well as entertained readers representative of the whole community. He had been the first really to popularize, among his countrymen, leading spirits of continental letters, like Paul Louis Courier, and Schiller.* His essays on these had not only broadened the conception of culture for the masses, but had introduced into it elements till then equally new and inaccessible. In addition to this, among those combining the best kind of literary production with the highest social position, the functions of patron to writers were shared by Lytton with the historian, the fifth Lord Stanhope. In both these men there was the same honest zeal for their common profession as an agency of national ennoblement. Each had the same genuine taste for literary scholarship, nor did Lytton's frequent preoccupation with mysticism in later years † impair his interest in Stanhope's

* *Pamphlets and Sketches*, "Knebworth" edition, pp. 175, 195.

† The association of his name with the notorious medium D. D. Home in the séances at Florence and elsewhere marks Lytton's spiritualistic enthusiasm as having reached its height 1850-6. Thereafter it gradually declined. The possibility of communicating with his daughter's spirit attracted him to Home; the vulgarity of one of Home's female clients began to repel him. This lady, as Lytton used to tell the story, had been brought into converse with her departed husband's spirit. "Are you," she asked, "quite 'appy, dear—as 'appy as when you were with me?" The reply came, "Oh, far, far 'appier." "Then indeed you must be in 'eaven," sighed the lady. "No," returned the gentleman, "I'm in 'ell."

favourite literary curiosities and exercises, constituting a special department of *belles lettres*, co-extensive with the region of research and thought made peculiarly his own by Isaac Disraeli first, by Charles Wentworth Dilke afterwards. This was cultivated with equal success by Stanhope in the two volumes of *Miscellanies*,* ranked by Lytton with the *Curiosities of Literature*. Lytton, indeed, had not waited his peerage to show his patriotic jealousy for the public honour due to the vocation of which he now ranked as the most variously accomplished and imposing representative. The installation (1863) of the fourteenth Lord Derby in the Oxford Chancellorship was attended by the usual distribution of honorary D.C.L.'s. The Cabinet Ministers like Disraeli, Mr. Secretary Walpole, and Sir John Pakington were to receive their degrees on the first day; the literary honours were to be bestowed on the next. This did not please Bulwer-Lytton, who, interrupting Sir Archibald Alison at "tea in our hotel," said in a great rage: "Well, Sir Archibald, what are you going to do? I'm off in the first train for London. To think of postponing such men as you and me to a parcel of political drudges who will never be heard of five years after their death!"—all this time impatiently puffing a huge Turkish pipe. "No one," was Alison's comment, "could doubt Lytton's indignation was provoked by a sense of *esprit de corps* wounded, rather than of personal dignity affronted." Eventually the historian convinced the novelist that the order of the academic programme implied a compliment rather than a slight. "Sir Archibald and Sir Edward" kept on the rooms at the *Star*, to be dined one day by Mark Pattison at Lincoln, and Professor Jowett at Balliol.

Shortly after the publication of the *Woman in White* Lady Lytton had written to Wilkie Collins: "The great

* *Miscellanies*, collected and edited by Earl Stanhope, second edition, with some supplementary letters. London, John Murray, 1863

failure of your book is the villain ; Count Fosco is a very poor one, and when next you want a character of that soft I trust you will not disdain to come to me. The man is alive and constantly under my gaze. In fact he is my own husband." This epistle was forwarded by Collins to Lytton, and could at one time be seen among the Knebworth papers. Nothing can be gained by dwelling more than has been already done upon the merits of the dispute between Bulwer-Lytton and his wife, only, as it proved, to be settled by the lady's death. In a foregoing chapter it was shown how aptly the first Earl of Lytton's poetry interprets and illustrates the theory of life contained in his father's novels. Not only might a strong family likeness be discerned between the literary genius of the two men ; the parallel between the contemporary estimates of each is too strikingly close to be overlooked now. The dowager Lady Lytton, in her later years, was sometimes scarcely less abusive of her firstborn, then Indian Viceroy, than of his father himself. With that exception, the Earl of Lytton's severest censors, social, personal, and political, were those to whom, in most of these capacities, he was almost or quite a stranger. Bulwer-Lytton had, in the manner already described, found Disraeli the wife whose fortune and companionship were of vital service to him in his great career, and had personally helped him in his earliest election to Parliament. Lord Beaconsfield, therefore, may well have welcomed the opportunity of making his early benefactor's son Indian Viceroy in 1876. No one outside a lunatic asylum can suppose even paternal friendship would have bestowed this distinction on any but a man of proved administrative abilities. By universal admission these endowments belonged in a very remarkable degree to the first Earl of Lytton and were found wanting at no subsequent stage of his career. The really great men with whom Indian affairs brought him into closest touch, as regards

antecedents, personal temper or tastes, general views of life, literary or artistic idiosyncrasies, presented contrasts as complete as can easily be imagined to Robert Lytton. Such men were Fitzjames Stephen, Henry Brackenbury, and the Earl of Lytton's own private secretary, Sir George Colley. The intimacy possessed by these and by others of the same calibre made them all unanimous in their testimony to the great qualities uniformly displayed by him in his high office. With the first Baron Lytton it will presently be found to have been the same as with the first earl. Real personal knowledge was always accompanied by high appreciation. Matthew Arnold, writing to his sister, Mrs. W. E. Forster, in 1853, to recommend *My Novel*, amongst other things for what he called its mellowed constructive skill, dwells on its author's great attributes as a man. Sixteen years afterwards, on visiting Knebworth, Arnold was struck not only by the landlord's care for his visitors, and the beauty of the cottages provided, but by the general and spontaneous affection which all about him showed for the Knebworth squire. His relations with the rank and file of literary workers may be judged of by the good offices which helped a friendless foreigner to a place among the most distinguished and prosperous journalists of the nineteenth century. The case referred to is that of Antonio Gallenga, from whose lips I had the details now to be mentioned. Mr. Monckton Milnes, the future Lord Houghton, had advised Saunders and Ottley to publish Gallenga's *Italy, Past and Present*. Of several distinguished persons who received presentation copies, Lytton alone acknowledged the book; he further took the trouble of ascertaining how he could best serve the author, then an obscure and needy exile in the squalid streets abutting upon Leicester Square; he lost not a day getting Gallenga to dine with him at his house in Mayfair. After an expression of delight at seeing an Italian able so effectively to

plead the cause of his country, and awakening European interest on its behalf, "I have never," he said, "known a foreigner to attain such a style, as beautiful in form as in thought." Urging the Italian refugee to find some other employment than that of the pen, Lytton offered his private secretaryship at a substantial salary. He did, however, far more than this. In Gallenga's words, "Sir Edward Lytton's conversation revealed to me my own mind as a looking-glass would reflect my face. His words contributed to make me known to myself, and so to place me on the road to self-correction and improvement." Lytton's good offices did not end here. A few days later he sent his protégé with letters to Delane and Mowbray Morris in Printing House Square, thus beginning for him his connection with the *Times*, first as foreign correspondent in Italy, afterwards as leader writer in London. Despatched, in 1848, to describe the anti-Austrian movement in his native land, Gallenga, before going, was Delane's dinner guest at his little house in Serjeants' Inn, Lytton himself and Robert Lowe being also of the company.

The title given in 1866 was not only the expected compensation for physically unavoidable retirement from active politics; as Dickens said, writers and readers alike partook of the honour paid Lord Lytton. The new peer did not deliver the speech he had prepared on the Household Suffrage Bill, nor does Hansard record any utterance from him in the hereditary chamber. His brain, however, remained powerful as well as clear, and his imagination soon showed that it had not lost the freshness of youth. At Knebworth he took some part in county business, received and addressed the Hertfordshire yeomanry cavalry in his park, but in London the chief occasion of popular interest on which he delivered a public speech was in his capacity of chairman, November 7, 1867, at the farewell dinner at Freemasons' Hall to Charles Dickens, then about

to start for the United States. On that occasion some amusing banter was exchanged between the president and the guest of the evening about the comparative claims of Lord Frederick Verisopht and Sir Mulberry Hawk on the one hand, and Falkland, Pelham, Ernest Maltravers, and Godolphin on the other, to be considered faithful portraits of English gentlemen in daily life. To these later years belong Lytton's prologue, written at Dickens's wish, to Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*.* After 1866 Lytton filled something like the position in which his countrymen know Lord Rosebery during the twentieth century's first decade. He was the occasional orator, domestic and foreign, of the Empire. In 1851 he had taken the chair at the farewell dinner to Macready. His chairmanship at the Dickens dinner sixteen years later formed his acknowledgment of the tribute received by him from Dickens on the earlier occasion. "There cannot," Dickens had said, in 1851, "now be, or ever have been, among the followers of literature a man so entirely without the grudging little jealousies that too often disparage its brightness, as Sir Edward Lytton." "That," is John Forster's comment, "is as richly merited as it was happily said." At another date, the subject being a prospective benefit performance of

* This composition was not published at the time. Mr. John Forster gave it from memory—as nearly as may be to the following effect :—

He comes, our grey-haired bard of Rimini ! †
Comes with the pomp of memories in his train,
Comes with familiar smile, and cordial tone,
Our hearth's wise cheerer ! Let us cheer his own !
Song links her children with a golden thread,
To aid the living band stides forth the dead.
Hark, the pale music of the elder age :—
Ben Jonson's giant tread sounds, ringing up the stage !
Hail ! the large shapes our fathers lived ! again
Wellbred's light ease, and Kitely's jealous pain.
Cob shall have sense and Stephen be polite,
Brainworm shall preach, and Bobadil shall fight,
Each, here a merit not his own shall find,
And Everyman the Humour to be kind.

† Leigh Hunt, for whose benefit the performance was.

Ben Jonson's one drama revived in modern times, Dickens, with greater detail and with more emphasis, repeats the same opinion about Lytton, then, it would seem, meditating his prologue to *Every Man in his Own Humour*. Lytton found other occupations than these for absence from Parliament in his later years. His Knebworth hospitalities were occasionally diplomatic and imperial, as well as colonial functions. The most memorable and interesting of these was the Turkish Grand Vizier's visit to Knebworth (1858). Sir Henry Bulwer, Lytton's brother, then British ambassador at Constantinople, had special reasons for wishing Fuad Pasha to be gratified by his English visit. London was empty, Lord Malmesbury, the Foreign Secretary, was with the Queen in Scotland. At short notice a party was arranged for the distinguished foreigner at Knebworth. Lord Lytton had a special reason for making this effort. His son was then attached to his uncle's embassy at the Turkish capital. An appreciative and encouraging, Lord Lytton had never been a weakly, indulgent father. Eventually he raised his son's allowance to £500 a year, but during the earlier stages of the future Earl of Lytton's diplomatic service the allowance did not nominally exceed £80. In entertaining Fuad Pasha the Knebworth host might reflect that, while serving his political friends at home, he was also helping on his heir's professional promotion. The visit proved a great success. It was also enlivened with some repartees which will still bear repeating. One of the fair inquisitresses, asked to meet Fuad Pasha, wanted to know the number of his wives. "The same number as your husband's," was the reply, "only he conceals one of them and I don't." Another version of this anecdote runs a little differently. "One, and I find that quite enough." On this occasion the Knebworth host was much helped in his social duties by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, then the recent perpetrator of a novel, and ambitious of dramatic authorship. "You cannot," was Lytton's advice,

"study too often *Tom Jones* and *Ædipus Tyrannus*." Voltaire's plays were also recommended by Lytton as specially instructive in the story-telling art in the way they lead up to the catastrophe and sustain the interest throughout.

At no time, however, during the years now dwelt upon did the author entirely efface himself in the host, in the occasional orator, or in the literary adviser, consulted by many others than his private secretary and friend, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. His pen was never idle till death took it from his hand. Coming fourteen years after the *New Timon*, *St. Stephen's*, as to scope and style, practically forms a part of that earlier poem. Succinct sketches of our principal parliamentary orators, commencing with the origin of parliamentary eloquence during the civil wars, and closing with Sir Robert Peel, were the words prefixed to the first instalment of the *New Timon* in *Blackwood* (January, 1860). That was followed by continuations in the February and March numbers. Bulwer-Lytton, it has been said, never founded a school. At the same time he influenced most perceptibly other writers of his time. Between 1857 and 1867 he had incurred the displeasure of certain exceedingly clever and socially rather bitter writers for the Press by his change of politics from Liberal to Conservative. As a fact, there had been no change, but only development. His seventeenth-century ancestors had been successively Cavalier and Roundhead, according as the principles for which they stood seemed for the moment most truly embodied in King or Parliament. In 1852 Lytton only illustrated the ancestral analogy. His detractors were led by E. M. Whitty, who, as a protest against the ornate and effeminate Lyttonian style, wrote, in the *Friends of Bohemia*, a novel professing to reproduce Thackeray's terse and virile Anglo-Saxon. The very baldness and bluntness of this composition had the immediate effect of creating a reaction in favour of Bulwer-Lytton among

the minor novelists, for the most part also, like Whitty, newspaper writers of that day. Nor were verses, of the sort in which Bulwer-Lytton excelled, less of a power for good than had been his prose. In *St. Stephen's*, as he had before done in the *New Timon*, he had revived the taste for the Popeian metre which delighted our ancestors. The first Poet Laureate of the twentieth century, then a young man of twenty-five, was stimulated by *St. Stephen's* into an exhibition of his own skill as a rhyming satirist. Lytton's sequel to the *New Timon* had scarcely run its course in *Blackwood* when Mr. Alfred Austin in *The Season* (to be followed by *My Satire and its Censors*) further piqued, while partly satisfying, the literary appetite which the older man of letters had recreated. The other chief poem of any length belonging to the period now reached was the *Lost Tales of Miletus*. This was an industrious and clever *tour de force* to supply the literary place once occupied by the famous compositions, as Lytton calls them, that were the remote progenitors of the modern novel. Lytton's time possessed no greater expert in literary curiosities with a classical flavour than the historian, Lord Stanhope; he, in such a matter, an impartial judge, pronounced the experiment a success.

Another literary patron of Lytton's time, Lord Houghton, discovered the poetic gift of David Gray. Much earlier in the nineteenth century Edward Bulwer had used his social opportunities to promote the appreciation of "L. E. L." He never greatly admired Longfellow, but when one of his visitors was, in his superior way, subjecting to a verbal dissection the *Psalm of Life* he at once intervened:—"How, you ask, can a footprint on the sand be sublime, and how can it be seen by one described as sailing and shipwrecked? The mariner, I answer, has till recently been sailing, has escaped from the wreck with his life, and sees upon the shore to which he has been washed a sign of humanity. The prospect of

rejoining his fellow-creatures wakes a sentiment which is sublime. And there is here really no confusion of imagery nor impropriety of metaphor." Among other poets of his time, Lytton cared little for Tennyson and less for Browning. Among novelists, he placed Dickens easily first, with *David Copperfield* for by far his best work. He had small praise for Wilkie Collins, ranking the *Woman in White* a good deal below Charles Reade's stories. The magazine with which Lytton's fame associates itself most closely, as well in the matter of his novels as of his essays, is *Blackwood*. He did not refuse contributing to the *Cornhill* under Thackeray, but he wrote in it nothing of the same length as that excellent specimen of his work in the modern supernatural, *A Strange Story*. This appeared in Dickens's *All the Year Round*; I had it from Dickens's intimate friend and assistant editor, Mr. W. H. Wills, that Lord Lytton always used to speak of this contribution as having been suggested to him in a dream. With the *Caxton* series had commenced the design of exhibiting the upper classes in a truer and kindlier light than that thrown upon them by the dark lantern of the Socialist, Radical, or Free Trade Diogenes. This purpose, with the infusion into it of certain imperial ideas, was systematically carried on till *Kenelm Chillingly*. *The Coming Race*, published a little before *Chillingly*, presents another instance of the way in which the author's ideas grew to their final development; for, while *The Coming Race* appeared in 1870, its germ may be found some forty years earlier in that section of the *Student* called *Asmodeus at Large* (p. 331, etc.). Of the two last books, *Kenelm Chillingly* and *The Parisians*, the former, occupied with the creations of fancy, is essentially a romance, the latter a novel. In it the typical Englishman, Graham Vane, none other than the novelist himself in early manhood, stands serene amid the restless whirl of the busy world, in dramatic contrast with the priests, atheists,

legitimists, Orleanists, millionaire financiers of the Chaussée d'Antin, and the fierce Socialists of Belleville. What Vesuvius is to *Pompeii*, that the German siege is to *The Parisians*. Suddenly adventurers strive to make capital out of the calamities of their country; rich Rentiers, brought near starvation for want of bread, shoulder the chassepot. Dandies serve in ambulances; literary leaders choose between oblivion and prostituting their pens to the doctrines they dread. Through all this runs the double thread of two charming love stories, entwining itself with the fortunes of the chief characters, and making the web of intricate intrigue consistent and harmonious. With Isora for the best woman drawn by Lytton since Eva in *Pilgrims of the Rhine*, showing herself, in comparison with Nora Avenel, what Graham Vane is to Audley Egerton. "My leading idea in *The Parisians*," shortly before his death said Bulwer-Lytton to Lord Carnarvon, "is, after presenting types of the Second Empire, to show the influence of public calamity on individual character, suddenly doomed to privations like those denounced by Hebrew prophets against Babylon and Nineveh."

With eyes often cast back upon the experiences of his youth, but never long removed from the present, Bulwer-Lytton died in harness. The inflammation in the ear which had long troubled him brought on an epileptic fit. A few hours later all was over. Eight days afterwards, the national sense of fitness was gratified by his burial in that Westminster Abbey which he mentioned when putting the finishing touch to his last novel. "To have served his own generation in a higher or lower sphere is a glorious description of any man's life. Lord Lytton's life was a solid good to the world. Now that he has gone, there is one person less to carry out the will of God here below." So, in his sermon from the pulpit of the same Abbey, said Benjamin Jowett of the man whom, after the manner already de-

scribed, he had first met in Germany more than a quarter of a century before. In the creation of undying characters Bulwer-Lytton may have been surpassed by the greatest of his contemporaries. His *Parisians* would be even a finer and more instructive work than it is if he had varied the early pictures of life in the capital with some provincial contrasts like those interspersed among the sketches of London society and politics in *My Novel*. Even thus, however, for variety, as for shrewd and suggestive commentary, on the aspects, the personalities, the interests, and the issues of nineteenth-century life, European as well as English, there is, and will always be, a value unique and imperishable in those novels of their respective epochs which began with *Maltravers* in 1837, continued with *The Caxtons* first, with *My Novel* afterwards, and closed with *Kenelm Chillingly* and *The Parisians* in 1873.

INDEX

A

- Alice, or the Mysteries*, 41, 124
 Alison, Sir Archibald, 331
 Arnold, Matthew, 333
Asmodeus at Large, 195
Athens, 8, 129, 133, 224
 Australia and Lytton, 310; two towns there called after him, 311

B

- Bentinck, Lord Henry, 146
 Berry, Miss, 65
Blackwood's Magazine, Lytton's association with, 301
 Browning not admired by Lytton, 339
 Buller, Charles, 39
 Bulwer, Dr., 9
 Bulwer, Edward, 48
 Bulwer, Henry, 191
 Bulwer, Justice, 10
 Bulwer, William Earle, 11, 13, 16, 136
 Bulwer-Lytton's, Mrs., dislike of Rosina Wheeler, 122 *et seq.*; finds out her age to try and dissuade her son from marrying her, 124
 Bulwer-Lytton's, Mrs., quarrels with her daughter-in-law, 149 *et seq.*

- Byron, 80, 85; taken by Lytton for his model, 54
 Byronic pessimism in Lytton's early novels, 34

- Carlyle praises Lytton for introducing German culture, 5
 Carnarvon, Lord, 307; what he learnt from Lytton, 307
Caxtoniana, 7, 89, 93, 111, 233, 266
Caxtons, The, 4, 11, 18, 263, 264, 271-9, 295
 Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice, 36, 38, 39, 46, 62, 77, 266, 280
Coming Race, The, 5, 339
 Collins, Wilkie, 97
 Cunningham, Mrs., 60-1, 73, 74, 120, 137, 143

D

- D——, Lucy, 32-3, 51, 80
 Dalling, Lord, 36
Darnley, 251
Delmour, or a Tale of a Sylphid, 43-4
Devereux, 37, 64; 160-1; sources of, 162; autobiographical, 163; immediate success of, 164
 Dickens, Charles, 325

Dickens's compliments to Lytton,
334-5; Lytton presides at public
dinner to, 334

Disowned, The, 3, 55; published
anonymously, 157; design of,
158; autobiographical touches
in, 158-9

Disraeli, Benjamin, intimate with
Lytton, 90; their joint debt to
Voltaire, 90; his earlier novels,
91; intimacy with Lytton, 199-
202; submits MS. of *The Young
Duke* to him, 201

Doyle, Sir John, 65

Duchesse de la Vallière, failure of,
on the stage, 245

E

Egerton, Lord Francis, 206

Eidor Moratcham, 90

England, 224

English Prose, Lytton's opinions
on, 98

Ernest Maltravers, 58, 59, 240;
popularity of, 241 *et seq.*

Eugene Aram, 3, 10, 15; publica-
tion of, 175; idea of, 175-7

Falkland, 3, 15, 92, 104; reception
of, 105-19; comparison with
Vivian Grey, 106; Germans
enthusiastic over, 108; adverse
British and American reviews
of, 109; suppressed, 117

Forster, John, 6, 34, 42, 95, 133
160, 163, 263, 327, 335

allenga, Antonio, 333

General Election of 1831, Reasons
for, 187 *et seq.*

ladstone's mission to Ionian
Islands, 314 *et seq.*

lenallan, 86, 118

odolphin, 16; publication of, 177;
plan of, 178-9

Greene, Miss, 145

Greville, 118

H

Harold, 8, 259-60

Haunters and the Haunted, The,
301

Hildyard, Robert, 36

Historical novel, Lytton's early
and later styles of, 256 *et seq.*;
his idea of its true function, 258

Hooker, Dr., 23

I

Indian Government before The
Mutiny, 293

Ismael, An Oriental Tale, 31, 43, 83

J

Jowett, Benjamin, meets Lytton,
281

K

Kenelm Chillingly, 4, 34

King Arthur, 267-71; performed
at Buckingham Palace, 271

Kinsela, Abbé, 57, 163

Knebworth, treasures of, 322-3
Lytton's life there, 323 *et seq.*

L

Lady of Lyons, The, produced at Covent Garden, 218; reception in America, 247

Lamb, Lady Caroline, 52-6, 70

Last Days of Pompeii, The, 8, 234-5

Last of the Barons, The, 37

Last of the Tribunes, The, 236-7

Letters to John Bull, Esq., 282 *et seq.*

Lionel Hastings, 54

Lockhart's quarrel with Lytton, 184-6; reconciliation with, 186

Lost Tales of Miletus, 70, 338

Lucretia, 5, 51, 263; comparison between it and *The Caxtons*, 264

Lytton, Earl of, 332

Lytton, Elizabeth Barbara, 12, 13

Lytton, Lord, and his contemporaries, 1 *et seq.*; admiration of his contemporaries for, 4 *et seq.*; continued popularity in the provinces, 7-8; his ancestors, 8-20; birth and early years, 13-20; his brothers, 17; sent to school at Cheam, 23; reasons for not going to Eton, 25; at Dempster's, Brighton, 26; sent to a private tutor's, at Ealing, 28; life at Ealing, 29 *et seq.*; first love affair, 31-3; studies at Ramsgate, 35-6; goes to Cambridge, 36; his contemporaries at Cambridge, 36; life at Cambridge, 37; migrates from Trinity to Trinity Hall, 37; joins the debating society, 38; his success there, 38; famous contemporaries at Cambridge, 39; wins the prize poem on sculpture, 40;

first book published, 43; a Christian all his life, 48; his theological reading, 49; religious sympathies, 49-50; early English travels, 51; visits the Lakes, 51; Platonic attachment to Lady Caroline Lamb, 52-6; a gipsy falls in love with him, 55-6; second at a duel, 56-7; goes to Paris, 57; idea of visiting Russia, 64; buys a commission in 1826 and holds it for three years, 65; assumes name of Lytton-Bulwer on grandfather's death, 67; his mother disapproves of proposed marriage to Rosina Wheeler, 69; promises he will not marry without her consent, 71; goes to West of England, 71; revisits Paris, 72; tendency of literary studies, 74; determination to be a great writer, 87; intensity of his studies, 97; opinions on English prose, 98-103; returns to England with a determination to marry, 103; critical faculty, 115; despondency of, 120; letter to his mother regarding Rosina Wheeler, 125; marriage, 125; financial embarrassment, 127; his methods of work, 129; contributions to reviews, 130-1; early married life, 132 *et seq.*; estrangement from his mother, 132; compelled to write "pot-boilers," 133; removes from Woodcote to Fulham, 145; relations with his mother, 147; his wife's wastefulness, 148; family worries, 148 *et seq.*; reconcilia-

tion with his mother, 180; quarrels with Lockhart, 184-6; reconciliation with, 186; elected M.P. for St. Ives, 191 *et seq.*; reasons that led to his entering Parliament, 193 *et seq.*; intimacy with Disraeli, 197-202; his radical opinions, 204-5; his two political periods, 205; his first speech in Parliament, 208; as member for Lincoln, 213-14; declines a junior lordship of the Admiralty, 216; made a baronet by Lord Melbourne, 216; resists Whig policy of coercion in Canada and Ireland, 216; last election for Lincoln, 219; defeated at Lincoln, 220; political impression on contemporaries, 221 *et seq.*; separation from his wife and reasons leading up to it, 225 *et seq.*; as a dramatist, 245 *et seq.*; his early and later historical methods, 256 *et seq.*; absent from House of Commons for eleven years, 280; translates Schiller, 281; re-enters Parliament, 281; his Parliamentary manner, 286 *et seq.*; criticism of Gladstone's first budget, 288 *et seq.*; lateness of best intellectual development, 290; consulted by the Cabinet, 291; service for Conservatives, 294; makes large sums by his books, 300; as Colonial Secretary, 303; natural transition to Conservatism, 305; his Colonial policy, 311 *et seq.*; sends Gladstone on mission to Ionian Islands, 314 *et seq.*; different London houses, 319;

visited daily by a mesmerist, 319; gambled only as a youth, 321; drops the name "Bulwer" on his mother's death, 322; life at Knebworth, 323 *et seq.*; his presence of mind, 324; as conversationalist, 325; his oratory, 327; last speech in Parliament, 328; created a peer, 329 *et seq.*; presides at public dinner to Charles Dickens, 334; visited by Turkish Grand Vizier, 336; literary opinions about his contemporaries, 339; his death, 340.

Lytton, Richard Warburton, 11, 18, 20, 47, 83

Lytton, Rosina, accusations against her husband, 228 *et seq.*; abuse of her husband, 296 *et seq.*

M

Macaulay and Lytton as political allies, 217

Maurice, F. D., influence on famous authors, 94

Milnes, Monckton, 236, 333

Money, success of, 249

Mortimer, 104

Musgrave, Thomas, 36

My Novel, 211; purpose of, 299-300

N

New Monthly, The, foundation of, 185

New Phædo, The, 34

New Timon, The, 6, 121, 261-3

Night and Morning, 134, 251 *et seq.*

Not so bad as we seem, performed before Queen Victoria, 249

O

O. Niel, 81

Ords, 51

Paris Society, 73

Parisians, The, 73, 96, 340

Parr, Samuel, 31

Paul Clifford, 3, 65, 72, 116; publication of, 164; plan of, 166-7; reasons for its success, 168 *et seq.*; its characters identified, 171; offends Sir Charles Dilke, 172

Pelham, 3, 15, 25, 58, 59, 81, 104, 118, 137; publication of, 138; key to, 139; its influence, 141; why it succeeded, 142; admiration of George IV and Sir Walter Scott for, 143; foreign translation of, 143; foundation of its popularity, 144

Pilgrims of the Rhine, The, 5, 233, 235

Politics, difference between French and English, 197 *et seq.*

Quarterly Review, Lytton's contributions to, 98

R

Reforms needed, 209 *et seq.*

Reign of Terror, The, 196

Richardson, 94

Richelieu performed at Covent Garden, 248

Rienzi, 8, 37

Routledge pays Lytton £20,000, 300

Rupert de Lindsay, 54; originals of characters, 54

S

Schiller, translated by Lytton, 281

St. Stephen's, 6, 338

Sala, George Augustus, 160

Sea Captain, The, performed, 296

Smith, Adam, 45

Southey, 277

Spence, Miss, 66

Spring Rice, 215

Strange Story, A, 5, 9, 339

Student, The, 14, 26, 34, 94, 193

Tennyson, praises Lytton, 6; and Lytton, 267; not admired by Lytton, 339

Thackeray, admires Lytton, 4; nauseated by *Falkland*, 108; disparages Lytton, 182-4; story of, 326-7

Thomson, Mr., 35

Townshend, Chauncy Hare, 40, 45-6

V

Villiers, C. P., 39

Villiers, Frederick, 56

Voltaire, Lytton's debt to, 90; his influence, 112-13

W

Wakefield, Gibbon, 275

Wallington, Mr., 30, 34

Ward, Plumer, opinion of Lytton, 239

Weeds and Wild Flowers, 58, 63, 68, 85

Wesley, John, 48

What will he do with it? 4, 18, 126, 300

Wheeler, Francis Massy, 65

Wheeler, Mrs., 67, 68

Y

Wheeler, Rosina, 66, 69, 72, 75-7,
79; Lytton's attempts to forget,
113

Yarmouth, Lord, 53

Young, Brigham, 325

Whewell, 44, 45

White, Lydia, 62

Whitty, E. M., 337

Zanoni, 5, 86, 245

Wordsworth, Christopher, 236

Zicci, 253